METRO / A17
Police autopsy report says UP student was badly beaten

SPORTS / A24
Williams sisters in US Open quarterfinals; Nadal wins

WORLD / A20
UK troops begin pullout from Iraq

NEWS / A5
9 Pinoy seamen recall ordeal in sea off Africa

NEWS / A2
Pope appoints new apostolic nuncio to RP

80, but still writing 'Dear Editor' letters

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

World Bank: Bribes stunt RP trade growth

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, September 6, 2007 ★★ Vol. 22 / No. 260

Trader to testify vs Abalos

'Hello Garci' probe on; Ping wants Manila cardinal grilled

By GMA Cabacungan Jr.

CHINESE VISITOR: President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomes visiting Chinese Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan to Malacañang on Monday. Cao arrived in Manila on Sunday for a five-day official visit to the Philippines.

Joey-Willie face-off looms on Senate floor

By GMA Cabacungan Jr.

LIGHTNING RALLY: A police water kiss is head off a small group of leftist activists staging a lightning rally in front of the US Embassy in Manila on Monday. The militants were protesting the intervention of the US government in the arrest of Communist Party of the Philippines founder Jose Ma. Sison by the Dutch government.

China pledges ₱90-M aid to AFP

By Nikko Dizon

Chinese firm says raps vs broadband deal baseless

By John Liboro Jacellano
Nico T. Clabuenabo
and Beverly T. Natividad

A BUSINESSMAN IS WILLING to testify in any investigation that Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. offered a rival firm of China's ZTE Corp. $10 million to withdraw from the national broadband network (NBN) project.

Young Abalos cries foul over 'sexcapades' charge vs dad

By Krissel L. Abon

Is the 2010 campaign on? 'Mr. Palengke' bits trail

By Vincent Cabreza
and Delmar Cariño
Inquirer Northern Luzon

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

Puno is new GMA adviser

He replaces Gonzales who is told to oversee Joma case

By Michael Lim Ubac

ALBERT OF THE CONTINUING Cabinet swamp, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday designated former Secretary Reneldo Puno consultant adviser on political affairs in a concurrent capacity.

He replaced National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, who was ranked last week with comparatively overseeing the political affairs office after Secretary Gabriel Claudio resigned for health reasons.

Gonzales was directed to concentrate on the case lodged against communist party founder Jose Ma. Sison in the Netherlands, and the forging of peace deals with armed rebels before the President's term ends in three years.

"The President said Puno, who is also president (on leave) of her party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), would serve in the dual role of head of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the political affairs office "indefinitely."

In a phone interview, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he understood that Puno would just be officer in charge of the office vacated by Claudio, a stalwart of the ruling party Lakas-CMD.

Claudio, 52, underwent delicate spinal surgery on Aug. 6. He was suffering from congenital narrowness and required titanium implants to stabilize his condition. On the advice of his twin brother, Rafael, a doctor and chair of Medical City's orthopedics department, he resigned from the Cabinet on Aug. 24.

Speaking to reporters on Bohol recently, Gonzales said he was inherently stepping into Claudio's shoes. "It's just that you don't say no to your President. You're given a task. We try."

Ermita said he was surprised by the latest Cabinet appointments.

"I had no idea. Three hours ago, I was interrupted by the President to make the announcement (of Puno's designation)," Ermita said.

He said Puno was actually Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye who relayed to him the President's order via a text message.

"So I acted on it," said Ermita.

Told that Gonzales had only taken over Claudio's post for about a week, also in a concurrent capacity, Ermita said: "Totally thought it was Secretary Gonzales. But you know, I'm a good boy. I do what I'm told," he said, "Yes ma'am," he added.

Earlier, rumors circulated that Puno was being eased out of the Cabinet after the bumbling debut suffered by the administration's economic candidates in last May's elections. Only three Team Unity bets—Juker Arroyo, Edgardo Angara and Juan Miguel Zubiri—managed to win seats in the Senate.

Besides Puno and Gonzales, the other members of the President's official family were reassigned recently were Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri who was "computerized" shoved in the Commission on Higher Education; Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, who took over the energy department; and acting Defense Secretary Avelinguenza Ebdane who was returned to his old post at Public Works.

SET YOUR JOBS HERE. Executives of several companies participating in the InQuBATE Job Fair at the Shoe Mall in Makati City pose with Vice President Noli de Castro who opened the fair yesterday. They are, from left, Dr. Mildred V. Visaya-ed, vice president of St. Peter Life Plan; Bruce Zaita, managing director, Corporate Executive Search; Joyce Palafox, human resources director, Accor Worldwide Phil.; Cora D. Corpus, SVP for HRD, Allied Bank; Inquirer president Sandy P. Hernandez; Jo Casero, Pepito Diaris, Inquirer VP for Advertising; Rene Reloma, Inquirer SVP for Sales and Marketing; Jessie Rebustillo, InQUARK/VP for ClassBeds; Susan Vidal, Executive Talent Manager, eGlobecom Global Solutions, and Enrique Nakpil, chief of the Inquirer Makati Press Satellite. The fair ends tomorrow.

House panel OKs polls postponement

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON suffrage and electoral reforms yesterday took the first step in postponing the barangay and youth elections in October by approving a consolidated bill resetting the polls to 2009.

The bill, the first to be approved at the committee level in the 14th Congress, mirrors the elections on the second Monday of May two years from now.

Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin, committee chair, said the panel's action was a reflection of the sentiments of Commission on Elections officials who were worried by the sometimes violent fights on the matter.

The position was shared by representatives of the Liga ng Barangay and the National Youth Council, according to Locsin.

"We not only invited the authors of the 13 separate measures to explain their position," he said in a statement. "We [also] listened to officials of the Comelec and they were one in saying it's best to postpone the polls."

The Comelec resource person argued that the October schedule of the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections were too close to last May's senatorial and local elections.

They also told Locsin that the Comelec commissioners had agreed in informal meetings that it would be better to reset the October elections.

Copies of the consolidated bill are now being circulated among committee members for approval. The measure is to be submitted to the committee on rules on Tuesday and will then be tackled in the plenary.

Satur: Not interested in taking Joma's post

By Christian V. Esguerra

BAYAN MUNA REP. SATUR Ocampo yesterday disputed a Malacañang official's suggestion that the militant lawmaker could be "positioning" himself to replace Jose Ma. Sison as the leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

"I have no ambition to replace Professor Sison, if he is indeed the leader of the CPP or leader of the revolutionary movement," Ocampo said yesterday in reaction to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales' assertion that he was eyeing the head role in the longest-running Maoist insurgency in Asia.

Gonzales made the observation on the heels of Ocampo's statements defending Sison following the latter's arrest by the Netherlands government. Dutch authorities have detained the CPP founder on charges of ordering the murders of his former comrades Romulo Kintanar and Arturo Tabara.

"Once again, the politically paranoid national security adviser is peering mailer into my factual and analytical statements as one having some knowledge of the CPP-NPP power process," Ocampo said.

Ocampo, head of the National Democratic Front peace panel during the Aquino administration, maintained that he was banned on performing his task as a party-list member of the House of Representatives.

The NDF is the political arm of the CPP.

New papal nuncio to RP

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS named the Vatican Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Archbishop Edmund Joseph Athieno, the new Apostolic Nuncio to the Philippines, the Vatican announced yesterday.

Athieno succeeds Archbishop Fernando Filoni, who was appointed Substitute for General Affairs of the Secretariat of State, the Third most important position in the Vatican.

Born in Philadelphia, USA, on Aug. 14, 1946, Athieno was ordained a priest in May 1970. He has a doctorate in canon law.

Athieno, 61, has previously served in Rwanda, Kenya, Honduras, Ireland, Denmark and Czech Republic. Nikko Dizon

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Better jobs, wages would mean fewer child workers, says labor group

By Jeremaine Reving

JOBLESSNESS, WAGE INCREASES and regular, proper jobs could bring down the number of child workers, a labor group Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) told the Department of Labor and Employment yesterday.

In a statement, KMU urged the DOLE "to sincerely and effectively" raise the wages of workers nationwide and produce quality jobs to bring down the number of child workers.

Labor Assistant Secretary for special Concerns and Bilateral Affairs Ma. Teresa Soriano admitted Friday that child workers persisted because their parents were not earning enough and could not themselves land jobs. The labor department has estimated the number of child workers in the country at 4 million.

"It is very tragic that our children are forced to work early not because of their parents' irresponsibility or callousness but due to the government's inability to promote their well-being by providing enough jobs and decent wages for the people," said KMU secretary general Elmer Labog.

Soriano said Sonsoro's administration is drawing up for the labor department endorsing the problem of unemployment and low wages.

"While the problem of unemployment and low wages is the country are systemic because of the moribund economic and political rules that we have, the labor department can help increase the wages of workers by supporting the legislated wage increase that we have been campaigning for for years," he said.

The labor department can also conduct more jobs fair promoting and supporting Filipino entrepreneurs and businessmen and protecting them from unfair competition, he added.

Soriano emphasized that as long as wage hikes were demanded and denied by regional wage boards, administration wage increases for workers would remain elusive.

He also noted that "globalization" policies like liberalization, deregulation and privatization, which the Arroyo government continues to implement, caused income and livelihood to collapse and undermined domestic productive sectors.

Test shows 90% of Grade 6 studes ready for high school

DepEd credits reading program for high scores

By Kristine L. Alave

ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF GRADE 6 students are ready for high school, while they have long skills in Math, English and Science conducted to improve, according to the results of last March's National Achievement Test (NAT).

Officials of the Department of Education yesterday said they were happy with the results, which revealed that the pupils' learning skills were getting better in Math, English, Science, Filipino and Makabayan (languages, Komunikasyon at Gibbo or Geography, History and Civics).

5.28-percent increase

The DepEd said there was a 5.28-percent increase in the mean percentage scores (MPS) of the over 1.6 million students who took the test, a rate that went beyond their target of 3 percent.

This is the third year that saw an increase in the students' score, according to the DepEd.

"The MPS of 59.84 percent from the 2007 NAT was more than what we expected from the target of 2 percent earlier set by our Bureau of Elementary Education," said Education Secretary Jesli Lapus.

The DepEd said the MPS in the 2006 NAT was recorded at 54.56 percent, or an increment of 5.28 percentage points.

Officials credited the Every Child A Reader Program for the improved scores. The program, which was started in 2002, focuses on teaching Grade 3 students to read with comprehension.

Lapus also said that the better-than-expected results showed that reforms in the education sector were bearing fruit.

Average mastery level

The DepEd results also showed that some 791,424 students, or 49.17 percent of those who took the test, posted scores between 36 and 60 percent, placing them in the average mastery level.

Some 613,223 students, or 38.72 percent of examinees, got scores between 61 and 85 percent, which means they were moving towards mastery level, while 83,381 students, or 5.92 percent, were considered closely moving toward mastery level as they received scores between 86 and 95 percent. Only 16 students received scores between 96 and 100 percent, classifying them in the mastery level.

Three students who got scores in the average mastery level and above are ready for high school, according to DepEd Regional Education Training and Research (RETR) director Rita Sibulan.

Meanwhile, some 131,751 children, or 8.16 percent, were considered in the low mastery level, while 155 children, or 0.01 percent, were slapped as having very low mastery. Thirteen students were classified as having no mastery at all.

Remedial classes needed

Students in these categories should need remedial classes to get by in high school, the DepEd said.

Incidentally, females got a higher MPS of 61.01 percent compared to males who got 58.96 percent.

The DepEd said they planned that tests would be skip more school days as they were expected to help them in the future.

Students from rural schools also outscored their urban counterparts, getting an MPS of 60.01 percent compared to 59.40 percent.

Officials said children in the countryside were more focused in their schooling while children in the cities had more distractions.

9 Pinoy seamen recall ordeal in sea off Africa

By T Quintinalla

IT WAS A SOMBER homecoming for nine Filipino seamen who survived the cold waters of South Africa last month after their tugboat capsized, killing one of their companions.

The ordeal was still fresh in the minds of the seafarers when they arrived at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport yesterday.

"The weather was really bad. Our boat (the 17-foot motorboat MV Jimela Yeh) started to list. We did everything for the boat and crew to survive but there was nothing more we could do," Nelvin Dimon, 39, told the inquirer.

The 13 Filipino crew and their Honduran captain jumped off the sinking tug to turbulent waters off Port Alfred, South Africa, on Aug. 22, just before 6:00 a.m., but before still abandoning ship, some had joined the boat then en route to Cameroon.

One seaman, Benedicto Agtarap, vanished in the water while the others struggled to stay afloat.

"He was the last one to jump. The last person to see him said he was singing while in the water. We just don't know what went. There are child[ren] [wi]dow him," Dimon said to Filipino.

The body of Agtarap, the lone fatality in the accident, was found some three hours after the rest of the crew were rescued by the South African Air Force and maritime authorities.

Dimon said they encountered huge waves and whipping winds some 30 hours into the journey.

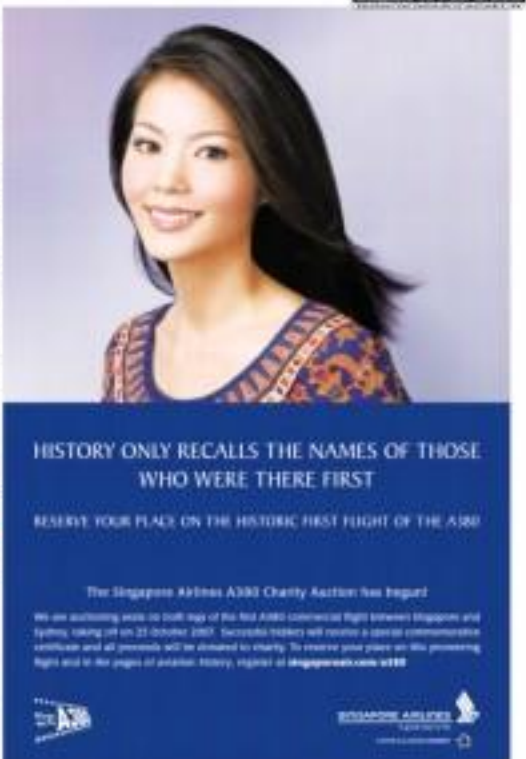
With the boat listing, the captain ordered the crew to abandon ship.

"The captain could not do anything more. We couldn't do anything but jump into the water," said chief engineer Geocerec Alfaraesis, 53.

"We were in the water for nearly two hours... It's a good thing it was our summer in South Africa, otherwise we wouldn't have lasted 30 minutes," said Dimon.

Seven of the 10 Filipino were rescued by a navy utility craft, others and their captain were plucked from the water by a military helicopter.

The other survivors were identified as second engineer Feliel Maserato Jr., second mate Dennis Dimmon, bosun/cook Jessie Villanueva, Jose Fe Jacinto Jr., Nestelo Segue, Octavio Ongajeta Jr. and Warren Eclano.



'Hello Garci' probe on …

From page A1

invite the good Lee Buenio to shed light, assuming that he was the one who told Bishop Villegas," Lacson said.

Only the truth

"He seems to know who exactly ordered him to bring Dobie to the quarters of the chief of staff. We're only after the truth. We want closure. Just we want a total closure with all questions hanging over our heads," Lacson said.

He added: "I know Antipas can be the truth, only to the [those who] are trying to hide it? If he says, 'don't investigate,' is that not hiding the truth?"

Villar asked whether he will for Senators to attend the Senate probe was in reaction to the cardinal's requested appeal for an end to the Garci probe so that the country could move on, Lacson replied: "What do you think?"

Lacson said Bishop Antipas probably did not want the public to know who actually made the request to get Dobie out of the country.

Like summoning the Pope

Jinky Sumcad, spokesperson of the Archdiocese of Manila, told the Inquirer that the cardinal had no comment on the issue and would not be available for interview from the Senate.

While Sen. Aquilino Pimentel agreed with Lacson that the Church should not get involved in the Dobie affair, he cautioned the Senate against commencing a high Church official, noting this was like "summoning the Pope."

Other personalities likely to be summoned in the Senate probe, aside from Dobie, Santiban, and Mra are from the country Security Bureau, National Security Adviser Roilberto Gonzales, and the team of military operatives under "Project Lighthouse" which was supposedly involved in the wiretapping operations.

First witness

Following yesterday's organizational meeting of the three Senate committees that will hold in the probe, joint committee head Sen. Rodolfo Biazon announced that the members had agreed to start its hearings at 10 a.m. on Friday with Dobie expected to be the first witness.

Biazon said the Senate had decided to issue a subpoena to Santillano to prevent him from going abroad or going into hiding.

In a press conference, Biazon said the probe would focus on three aspects—who ordered the wiretapping and the "window" of running such an operation; when were the probable wrongdoings committed by public officials; and rationing the electoral system.

Controversial EO

The senators also discussed the possibility of the three-pronged investigation involving presidential Executive Order No. 464, which prohibits government officials from attending congressional inquiries without Mr. Arroyo's approval.

Senate President Manny Villar said: "I believe that the Supreme Court has declared EO 464 unconstitutional and I hope the executive respects that decision."

Biazon also wants to summon Commissioner Romeo Bautista of Investigation official Tommy Ong, who claimed to have notes pertaining to the so-called "mother of all tapes."

Where is Sammy Ong?

Biazon said Ong could corroborate Dobie's testimony. However, he said the Senate still had to verify Ong's whereabouts since he had been uncommunicable.

Biazon was non-committal on whether he would attend the Senate investigation.

"I'll cross the bridge when I get there," Biazon said.

Asked if he would allow military officials to appear before the Senate, Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said: "I will not bar the summons if there is one and I'll exert effort time."

Pressed if he would give way to Senate wishes, Teodoro said: "Anything that will destroy the focus of this panel in favor of the armed forces naturally should not be taken favorably."

"However, I will wear properly if and when such an item comes to my desk for consideration," he said. With reports by Jerry Esplanada, Christine Avendaño, Delfin Mallari Jr. and Nikko Dizon

HELLO again. Garci (4th from right) has told Senators Francis Escudero, Panfilo Lacson, Aquilino Pimentel Jr. (partly hidden), Richard Gordon and Rodolfo Biazon. Three Senate committees will handle the probe which is set to start on Friday. DESIGN/PHOTO

Joey-Willie face-off looms on Senate …

From page A1

In the "Willie-nator" segment of Willie CBN Records acting Gong's newcomer panel show "Showtime."

The Senate will join in on Boy Isaac's questionable antics in the ing 20 episode of "Willie-nator" as evident by its win over building the project number "2" for the top prize of 0.5 million when the number should have been on the wheel which showed a "0."

The episode causes questions on how television game shows are regulated to ensure and guarantee protection of consumers, especially as such game shows could be seen as a promotion many firms for various products and services," Biazon said.

Santillano, who had earlier said he had nothing to explain, is likely to accompany ABS-CBN producers to shed light on the controversy.

Dr. Jose said his problem at a viral recruitment show "Eat Bulaga" in GMA 7—Attorney Sen. Vicente Sotto III—is that the show allowed to chase their long-opponents in ratting and hosting TV game shows which could pave the way for an encounter between the group and Bro.Eliseo.

The two Senators appeared in an on-cam would run in their respective shows last week.

"The network was is not our primary concern. The real issue here is how we can ensure people will not be harmed by game shows that the network will be free," Biazon said in Filipino during a visit to Bureau of Customs public market yesterday.

DTI meeting

Biazon is expected to meet today with officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, the consumer watchdog, which, he said, should be the lead government agency monitoring TV game shows to ensure that these producers do not rig the outcome and deny the jackpot prize to contestants.

"The outcome of this meeting will determine parallel actions to protect our consumers and ensure that game shows do fall under the oversight function of the DTI," Biazon said.

He was riled by the department's rushed refusal to take responsibility for TV game shows. "If the DTI says it can resolve this issue without the need for [Senate] action, then I will withdraw my resolution but with a caveat that [while] standards must be established to prevent a repeat of the Weinstones' incident."

More complaints

But more complaints are coming against the popular variety program.

The family of slain Master Cpl. Manuel Tendero Jr., one of the 15 soldiers killed in a clash with Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sinulan on Aug. 18, said in Bagio that they were going to prosecute after being badgered by "Showtime" producers into participating last week as cohosts to show that had been dedicated to the slain troopers.

August Tendero said the producers repeatedly called them up while his brother was being buried on Aug. 27 urging them to join the Sept. 1 episode.

"We were told we would participate in the episode. And we had to have undergo an audition. We asked for a Friday audition schedule and proceeded to Manila acting borrowed bus fare," Tendero, 38, said.

Turned back

But when he and his sister Lea, 26, arrived at the network's studios, they were turned back by security guards because no announcement had already been ordered.

"They told us we could enter the studio but would be part of the audience. We decided to just turn back and go home," he said.

Tendero said the family was not even informed about their role in the show and were of the producers who had called him, supposed to be angry and messages.

Biazon vowed to summon him, he said.

Military liaison

A Marine sergeant, who identified as contract dancer Jonathan Lee, said he also contacted Tendero to encourage him to return to the studio.

"But I have made up my mind. My sister could trust the producers who called me and by members, to represent the soldiers who died in Mindanao, in the games. They told us the prizes were to be shared by all the families, but the game we were named for, I'm sorry, I'm not interested in," he said.

"I come forward just to set the record straight that we did not partake of these prizes. People here [were calling] us about it. [The producers] may try to offer us something later but people may assume we are simply offering money from them, so it is not likely we will accept it," Tendero said.

Consumer Code

Biazon said he hoped that the investigation would help the DTI craft new rules to further strengthen the 13-year old Republic Act No. 7394, or the Consumer Code of the Philippines, which regulates "false practices" to fend up rules on television game shows.

"The easiest thing to do is to ignore the whole thing. But there is a gap in the law that needs to be addressed. We need to address this now. We cannot, guided solely by the need to protect our consumers," he said.

The senator said it was about time that the Paddleboard Philippines Inc. and the host of other countries whom TV game shows were regulated by state agencies "because the size of the prize money can be running enough to prevent collusion or connivance."

As an example, Biazon cited the British television series on the Sept. 15, 2001, episode of the British "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" in which the winner of the 1-million pound prize had been coached by a bikini contestant.

The British authorities revoked the prize money and said the winners had his accomplices were brought to court. With reports from Tarra Quismorio, Inquirer Interbureau team

Is the 2010 campaign on? 'Mr. Palengke' hits trail

From page A1

cause no by Gloria and hugging Bonoc. But as soon as he walked by some remarked that Bonoc "campaign" was too early.

"Kumanong lang ng dalawa pagmodelo ko sa mall[Because he aged just up 2010 life have just finished the May 14 elections, but here you are starting out again. Pa nay bagay you what 2010 mean]," a meat vendor called out to Bonoc.

The senator did not respond to the remark.

Bonoc is the only announced candidacy for the 2010 presidential election and some of the market traders who met him have raised the issue.

Highly visible

But Bonoc was highly visible, meeting with farmers on Sunday afternoon to discuss why Malacañang's economic growth report for the second quarter had little impact on their industry.

He also discussed the environment with 6,000 participants of the National Training for Scholarship Grantees Conference held at Teachers' Camp on Sunday night.

Administration Sen. Juan Miguel Zubiri, who attended the same conference, told reporters that evening the "Hello Garci" probe would only benefit the presidential ambitions of some senators even if it tempts on Presidential Spouse Arroyo's rival Bonoc.

But Bonoc said he would not benefit politically from the Senate's reopening of the "Hello Garci" investigations.

New information

In fact, the investigators would be immediately summoned if senators failed to offer new information regarding the allegedly wiretapped conversations of Mr. Arroyo and

MR. PALENGKE. Sen. Manuel Bonoc II, meets a public market in Baguio City on Monday and wears the locals. A SENATOR'S OFFICE PHOTO

a former election official, Bonoc told the Inquirer yesterday.

He added that he "does not feel alluded to in any way" by Zubiri's statements.

"The matter has been pending for some time, according to Sen. Drilon [Lacson-Drilon or new information [on the wiretapped conversations] that ought to be investigated," Bonoc said.

Smuggling

"I think the Senate's [resolution] is they will see if there's actually new information filed ought to be followed up. Any walk-ins there (If there aren't any), then this thing will just wrap itself up quickly," he said.

On Sunday, Bonoc also visited the vegetable trading post in La Trinidad where he took a jab at Mr. Arroyo's recent announcement of a new economic by scoring her administration failure to curb vegetable smuggling.

He said the government's claim was negative since onion, of smuggling and inflation decrease showed a different picture of the economy.

Mr. Arroyo on Thursday said the gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 7.8 percent during the second quarter this year, the country's highest rate of growth in 20 years.

But Bonoc said the actual value of goods produced and services rendered, excluding income from abroad.

Reading economy

But Bonoc assailed the growth figure, saying the supposed economic growth was not felt by ordinary Filipinos, as unemployment is high, distant by the coming elections.

He said if there was indeed economic growth, it must trickle down to the poor in terms of food on the table, better jobs and affordable goods and services.

"If the economy grew why did diesel and gasoline consumption decrease? Where did those trucks, passengers, buses, airplanes and others get their fuel?" he said, without citing figures.

He said if the economy was good, there should be more trips and more truck deliveries so that would result in high fuel consumption, indicating a busy and bustling economy.

"If the economy is growing, why are the collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs low? If the economy is growing, why would the government still ask to borrow?" he said.

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Tillers slam RP-China land deals

By TJ Burgonio

MORE THAN 300 FARMER-BENEFICIARIES yesterday picketed the Department of Agrarian Reform to protest plans that would fast-track the distribution of land covered by agrarian reform in favor of agribusiness.

Waving flags and banners, the protesters sat on three lanes of Elliptical Road for nearly two hours under the sun, and called for a revamp of the department's leadership and prompt action on three concerns.

The rally coincided with the area.

The farmers were protesting a plan by DAR officials to increase the hectarage for agribusiness from 400,000 hectares to 1 million under a Philippines-China agreement.

Evangelina Mendoza of the peasants' group Ilocandia Pilipinas said Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Gerardo Madueña had hinted land in agrarian reform communities for agribusiness without consulting the farmers.

This land would be classified as "new lands" for plantation-type farms that would be created under the agribusiness agreement, she said.

Betrayal of farmers' interest

"This is a betrayal of the farmers' interest and a deviation from CARP's (Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program) national development thrust," the group said in an open letter to Bangsamoro.

"To relist the reformed lands in agrarian reform communities as part of the new lands offered for the controversial RP-China-agri deals is to put at stake our country's food security and hamper rural development," the group said.

At least 500,000 has have been identified for agribusiness, according to Mendoza.

Bangsamoro, who emerged from the DAR building to talk to the protesters on foot and a half into the rally, denied the alleged plan.

"There's no such plan," he curtly told reporters.

Mendoza maintained that she had seen a blueprint of the plan, which the said Madueña submitted to Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

Filipino and Chinese officials signed 10 agreements in January, involving investments estimated at $4.9 billion, aimed at enhancing agricultural and fisheries cooperation between the two countries.

Agritourism and organic farming

Three agreements provided for the development of 1 million has of land for hybrid corn, hybrid rice and hybrid soybean farming; another 200,000 has for agritourism and organic farming, and another 40,000 has for sugarcane and cassava production.

The farmer-beneficiaries also protested the exclusion of over 1,000 has of livestock range lands in Mindoro from CARP that is threatening to displace hundreds of beneficiaries.

They said DAR was "fast losing" its in-form orientation and seemed to prefer to "side with those who have money and influence rather than with the marginalized farmers and farm workers."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, September 4, 2007
22nd Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: 1 Thes 5:1-6,9-11
Gospel: Luke 4:31-37

Now went down to Capernaum, a town of Galilee, and began teaching them on the sabbath day. They were astonished at his way to teach him, for his word was spoke with authority.

In the synagogue there was a man possessed by an evil spirit who shouted in a loud voice, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I recognize you: you are the Holy One of God." Then Jesus said to him sharply, "Be silent and leave this man!" The evil spirit then threw the man down in front of them and came out of him without doing him harm.

Amazement seized all those people, and they said to one another, "What does this mean? He commands the evil spirits with authority and power. He orders, and you see how they come out!" And news about Jesus spread throughout the surrounding area.

Commentary:

The day of the Lord will come, but probably not in our lifetime. It has been over 2,000 years since Jesus' ascension and as a church in the eye of God's creation we are very young. We are to live in the world as God's children and not be running around like the pagans and worlds of the nations. We are one in God—those of us who live and those of us who have died believing in Jesus and struggling to allow Jesus to transform us and shape us from unbelief, faith or in the gift of evil. We are helpless and bring our ground in the promise of Jesus to bless, surround, continuing and the Spirit. Or we know this once more?

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SSS members get loan reprieve

By Christine O. Avendaño

MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY System (SSS) who are overwhelmed by their housing loan payments will be given another six-month breathing spell.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday said she had asked Social Security Commission chair Thelma Cresosteo and the SSS board to extend the condonation restructuring program for six more months.

Previously, the condonation period for SSS members' mortgages was extended from December 2006 to June this year.

"This is sound payback," the President said during the 56th anniversary celebration of the SSS at the SSS building in Quezon City.

The President noted the strong performance of the SSS, saying it was a big departure from what it was six and a half years ago when it was "facing financial collapse" and its funds were "in danger of running dry by 2015."

'Shining' example

She said SSS assets had risen to P268 billion, its investment income amounting to P15.58 billion in the last six months.

Mr Arroyo said this allowed the SSS to increase the pensions of its members twice in the last 11 months—a 10-percent hike in September last year and another 10 percent last month. This, she said, was the agency's "5th anniversary present to the Filipino people."

The President also cited the SSS as a "shining" example of how government was able to curb graft through institutional reforms.

"We embarked on a radical reform program and now SSS is back on its feet, stronger and more resilient than ever, and with its credibility regained," she said.

"SSS is one shining example of the fact that you have undertaken a strong and steady effort to curb graft through criminal justice, administrative controls and procedural reforms," she said.

As-Pac terror groups weaker but still a potent threat

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—TERRORIST groups in the Asia-Pacific region have been weakened in recent years but remain a concern threat, said regional leaders in a declaration issued here on Monday.

The agenda of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum has broadened from trade and investment to include security, health and other issues—and this year is adding global warming to the list.

Terrorism is certainly close to the top of Apec's agenda after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and remains among the issues leaders from the 21 member economies are expected to discuss as they meet until Tuesday.

But a US-led global campaign to dismantle cross-border terrorist networks and a period of relative quiet in the number of attacks could lead to a sense of complacency, experts warned.

Cross-border groups

Cross-border groups, such as the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah network in Southeast Asia, have been weakened in recent years by dozens of arrests in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

But up to 40 homegrown militant groups survive worldwide and continue to pose a threat, said Rohan Gunaratna, the head of Singapore's International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research.

"Many terrorist groups have survived in the region despite great pressure," he said. "The primary threat is from the homegrown groups because the transnational terrorist groups have been dismantled."

As an example, he cited the recent kidnapping of 21 South Korean church workers by Taliban militants in Afghanistan.

Sydney Jones, an expert on Southeast Asian militants with the Brussels-based research organization the International Crisis Group, said she doubted that any regional group currently had the capability to mount a major attack.

Militant goes on

But Jemaah Islamiyah had shown the ability to recruit new members and, in future, and to regenerate, she said.

"There is always a tendency that goes on within the movement," said Jones.

"You can't fully eradicate the problem. But you can push the problem underground, institution-during mechanisms and various controls ... to reduce the scope of threats," she said.

After its 2001 summit, Apec set up a counterterrorism task force that has been working on several projects aimed at securing the region's trade from terror attacks. AP

World Bank: Bribes stunt R

AUSTRALIA'S Prime Minister John Howard inspects a stable at the Sydney Op... Howard, center, of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders Meeting next ...

Wayne Arnold

Until recently, it was almost unheard of for Apec leaders to discuss corruption. But the World Bank's annual report on the issue, released Monday, has become required reading for the region's leaders.

The World Bank analysis estimates that bribes paid by companies in Apec countries might need to pay before they can get basic services, such as electricity, water and telephone connections, adding to the overall cost of doing business.

China pledges P90-M aid to AFP

Chinese defense minister Cao Gangchuan has pledged 90 million pesos (US$1.6 million) in military assistance to the Philippines, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said Monday.

Reyes said Cao made the pledge during a courtesy call on President Arroyo at Malacañang Palace.

Reyes said the Chinese defense minister also promised to help the Philippines in the training of officers and enlisted personnel.

Cao, who was given full military honors at the Department of National Defense grounds at Camp Aguinaldo, arrived in Manila on Sunday for a five-day goodwill visit, a "reciprocation" of the 2004 trip of a Philippine defense delegation to China.

A 1992 communiqué said Cao's visit "comes at a time when Philippines and China relations are at a 'golden age of partnership.'"

Cao will also call on President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile who will represent Senate President Manuel Villar and House Speaker Jose de Venecia. The Chinese delegation is scheduled to visit Cebu this week.

Since 2004, China has donated about $2.3 million worth of engineering equipment and transport vehicles to the Philippine military. Dozens of Filipino defense and military officials have also attended Chinese military and technical courses.

Ms. Arroyo has made frequent visits to China and has appointed at least four special envoys to deal with expanding economic, cultural and political relations with Beijing.

Spratlys avoided

By the last two years, the two sides have been holding annual defense meetings as well as exchanging intelligence and other information to fight terrorists, narcotics and human-rights violations.

Reyes said the two sides avoided discussions on a territorial spat in the South China Sea.

In 1995, the Chinese built ... on a submerged reef in the ... territory within the Philippines' exclusive economic ... claimed by Manila as part of its ... (Freedom) chain of islands.

In 2002, China and the Philippines together with other members of the ... bloc of South East Asian Nations signed the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea ... tension in the disputed area.

US concerns

China's diplomatic initiatives have caused worries to Washington.

Richard Armitage, a former secretary of state and an expert on ... affairs, said in an interview ... special envoy. The statement ... failed yesterday that US ...

80, but still writing 'Dear Editor' letters

From page 6

At claims on a debate in the latest political debacles.

Intl, at 80, Goldenda Perera is very "Dear Editor" has yet to have the last of him.

For Cut Wo Ei Wo: If you're the and retired city treasurer, engaging the public through the Op-Ed page has proved that one need not be a card-carrying journalist to be a tireless champion of the right to free expression.

One only needs a public pen and a love for life, according to this 80-plus-year-old letter-writer.

Leafing through the thick collection of clippings during a recent interview with the business, Perera said putting his thoughts on paper—whether they get published or not—had been among the pleasures of his retirement years.

He could still recall his first printed piece. An "impudent" that irate never called Judas a cannon and that the latter retaliated on Apostle up to the moment he took his own life. It came out in the Philippines Free Press in 1946.

Perera's lifelong passion had current, humble beginnings.

He said "a theme writing assignment on the subject of love," back when he was still an elementary school pupil before World War II, led him to his first adventures in English composition.

He remembers the dictionary just to make sure he got the right "definition of love"—and let the results flow from there. It's into and the ensuing touches. Both did impressed, asked him to stay after the class.

"I was asked whether I got my ideas and told him then I developed it myself from the definition in the dictionary. He told me who liked it. The next week after that, my work is selected and never went back to the school," he claimed.

Living in retirement for the last 14 years, Perera's hobbies also appears to run commonly papers in Ilocó. He writes a column titled "Gems of Thoughts" and another titled "Thinking Pills."

He is also a regular contributor to "The Collector Magazine" of the Free Masons, of which he is a member.

He said he had written his own memoirs and wanted to publish it into a book.

Perera had no time or only a little range of topics in his opinion letters, including criticisms hurled at the Catholic Church and the raging socio-political issues in the 1950s and '60s.

In the 2000s, for example, the hottest public discussions tended to be about local communities concern such as peace and order and keeping the boondocks clean, seldom about big political or public he said.

Text-and-run was the dominant theme of the 1960s, especially when the Philippine government claims were Initiik sponsored banners of no impending any anti-Malaysia, he added.

Perera started writing to the Inquirer shortly after the paper came to daily in 1986.

Among the "surviving" Inquirer clippings in his collection was the piece that was panned in June 1997, in which he warned against the pitfalls of implementing the Local Government Code and how it could make mayor civil servants "behemoths" to powerless local mayors.

The piece was in reaction to an Inquirer editorial which he admitted "hurting" because, for Perera, "it helped launch the presidential bid" of then Aquilino Pimentel, author of the code.

In July 1990, Perera again turned to the Inquirer in airing complaints over "irregularities and deficiencies." He said he did it specially for his wife.

In October 2005, he questioned the rich among terminals for paying for Charter change (Cha-cha). "With our economy now at its lowest ebb, consider... fraud charge it in pursuance that it would offer into the suffering of our less fortunate brethren."

His most recent letters to the Inquirer had the "blood bathing" over the military debacles in Basilan and also had him challenging President Macapagal-Arroyo to prove she is not a lame duck.

"I am relieved when I write an opinion on subjects that I read in the newspapers. Nobody can really stop me from expressing my thoughts, contradictory or otherwise," Perera stressed in the interview.

Unfortunately, some of his clippings—treasuring several pounds have been inadvertently lost. A college English professor who kept some of Perera's letters from 1996 to 1972, but apparently misplaced the entire batch—10, while another set of letters from 1973 to 1990 was destroyed during a typhoon.

Perera said he was just happy to have a "new collection" made up of his letters given from 2000 to 2006, "ready for bookbinding."

The octogenarian lives with his wife Trinchel and remains visibly in good health. The father of nine—seven grown up and now retired and retired government employees, aside from 8 assisted support from his children.

A native of Laguna, Generoso Jose Perera graduated from high school in Antonio de Haga in 1950.

At 15, Perera joined the underground guerrilla movement against the Japanese occupation forces. After the war, he finished high school and earned some college units.

He went to Cotabato Teeter to work in Dole-ist Lumber Co., an American logging concessionaire operating in Cagayan town. Perera was first assigned to payroll, but, owing to his academic credentials, shortly got promoted to an administrative personnel get elected secretary of the union.

His first government job was as bookkeeper in the defunct Bureau of Agricultural Extension. At the time, he also managed to finish accountancy at the Malayan Colleges here.

Perera later landed positions in the treasury department of the two Cotabato provinces. In 1982, he became assistant provincial treasurer of Cotabato. There and was close to 18 as the provincial treasurer of Bonifacio on February 1986 when the Edsa People Power broke out.

Perera was later assigned treasurer of Iligan City upon the takeover of the regime of normalization. He retired in 1991, boasting of an unblemished record.

His boss had been sending reports for years but never was he tempted to use his position as treasurer to enrich himself and cheat the government.

Perera said he was able to rebuild his house upon retirement not using his retirement benefits.

What particularly driven him even in his senior years to write complaints about government corruption to his belief that "that act can be recalled and corrected" by those in control of the government.

"I will continue writing as long as I live because it is very casual for me to do so when I read issues in the newspapers that get my attention," he said.

Surfers are flocking to try and ride Philippine waves.

P trade growth

"Regular leaders may need to engage in such negotiations repeatedly with a variety of different personnel," the report said.

"The outcome of the negotiations, whether or not a buffer is required and its amount, may differ in each case, thereby leading to unpredictability for private sector companies as to the level of effective cost they will face."

The report said these were also hidden trade barriers, separate from the formal network of tariffs and quotas, that added to the costs of doing business.

Complicated rules

"In many economies, the flow of goods and services remains hindered by complicated customs regulations, inefficiencies of modern technology in customs, the lack of handling and transportation infrastructure, or by other shortcomings," it said.

"If economies which still face problems facilitating trade, traders incur considerable additional costs when selling or buying goods and services on international markets."

Australian Trade Minister Warren Truss said the report showed there was more Apec could do to open up trade and investment within the region.

"Greater transparency and predictability in border trade and customs rules to business and ultimately to the consumer," Truss said.

Truss also released a separate report that found removing restrictions on investment would help Apec's poorer economies boost economic activity, thereby reducing poverty.

Restrictions

The report, prepared for Apec by the Canberra-based Centre for International Economics, found that restrictions on investment were greater in lower-income Apec countries.

It said restrictions included excessive regulation, unclear property rights, poor legal systems and inadequate competition laws.

"They increase costs and risks and limit a business's competition, leading to lower productivity and growth," Truss said.

"The report concludes that if investors in Apec economies faced fewer barriers, investment would be higher and of a better quality, economic growth would rise and the incidence of poverty across Apec would fall."

AFP

George W. Bush was so preoccupied with Iraq he was neglecting his second-ranking China to take greater leadership role.

"Beyond question, China is making real fast rights the emphasis that," said Armitage, who served the Bush administration. "Right now, we're just as preoccupied with Iraq that we're ignoring Asia really."

Bush is visiting shortly his attendance at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in Sydney this weekend to focus in Washington in time for report to Congress on progress in Iraq by top US General David Petraeus.

Armitage also criticised Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice for skipping two out of three annual meetings which bring the United States together with Asians.

The Bush administration has radically underestimated the importance of Asia, Armitage said.

"In almost every measure—military budgets, population growths, the need for true leadership—our interest will have us look to Asia."

Armitage said there was a danger of Chinese leadership in this burgeoning area of the world losing.

Australian Prime Minister John Howard, a strong supporter of Bush's Iraq policy, was reportedly bitterly disappointed that the US president would miss the second day of the two-day Apec summit.

In an attempt to make amends, Bush has extended his zone visit ahead of the Apec summit. He is due to arrive on Sunday and leave on Saturday.

Apec groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, United States and Vietnam.

With reports from Reuters, AFP

INQUIRER

OPINION

Serving the President

LAST WEEK PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, asked Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to go on leave for two months so his health would improve. The 76-year-old Gonzalez, who is obviously ahead his house would become permanent, the next day said he would take only a one-month leave because he did not want to be idle for a long time. He even made a great show of signing 20 documents in his hospital room.

EDITORIAL

We say, like some senators, that Gonzalez should make his leave permanent because it will be good for his health. He has rendered enough service (as observer, depending on one's point of view) to his country and should be allowed to rest. There are hundreds of brilliant lawyers who can fill his shoes as the Department of Justice. It is not as if Gonzalez is indispensable, and is the only one who is qualified to be secretary of justice.

From newspaper accounts, Gonzalez's ailments are serious. Last month he was hospitalized for a bleeding ulcer. Gonzalez said the ulcer affected his legs so he found it difficult to walk without any help. There is a photo of him being assisted to his seat at a meeting in Malacañang last Wednesday, a piece of gauze over his right wrist. There is talk that he may have to undergo dialysis. The secretary is obviously very sick.

He is in no condition to remain in a busy Cabinet post where every day he will be subjected to various pressures—not just work and deadline pressures, but also political pressure. For his own good, the President should ask him to go on leave permanently.

Gonzalez is a prime example of a Cabinet member who has outlustered his position. He has not dispensed impartial, unbiased and apolitical justice. In many of his directives, actions and statements, he has been biased, political and very protective of Ms. Arroyo. Most of the time, one listening to him would think that he is not the justice secretary but a political or publicity spokesperson of the President and her administration.

On the Subic rape case: From the start, Gonzalez expressed disbelief at "Nicole's" claim that she was raped by four American Marines. In his statements it appeared that he was lawyering for the US Marines whose interests were already being protected by the US Embassy and Philippine attorneys acting as their defense counsel.

On the Jalla Campbell slaying: Gonzalez exhibited the height of insensitivity when he blamed the victim, saying that "she was careless when she took a lonely walk by herself in a deserted area" and added, "[She] is also a little responsible." Apparently he made the statements to try to erase the impression that peace and order is very bad under this administration.

On the extrajudicial killings: Gonzalez said that United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston, who made a report on extrajudicial killings to the UN, was "just a mayabang [a bluffer] man" of the organization. He was apparently downgrading Alston's position to lessen the effects of his negative findings on the political killings.

On setting up a "rogues' gallery" of purported coup plotters: On one hand, Gonzalez said there was nothing unconstitutional or illegal in the proposal. On the other hand, constitutionalists like Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J. and the Concerned Lawyers for Civil Liberties said the proposed rogues' gallery would violate the right to privacy and cause a "chilling effect" on critics of the administration.

On the $329-million broadband deal with China's ZTE Corp.: Gonzalez said the contract was an executive agreement that did not need to go through a public bidding. He made the statement even without reading the contract, the original copies of which were lost and which had yet to be "reconstituted."

These and other statements indicate that Gonzalez on many occasions acted not as a justice secretary but more like a political spokesperson or a propagandist for the President and her administration. His statements have hardly, if at all, promoted the ends of justice, but on the contrary, may have even caused injustices, as in the cases of "Nicole" and Campbell.

Gonzalez has rendered enough service to President Arroyo. He is no longer needed as a political spokesperson. She might as well appoint someone who has more political points for JOMA. For his own good and for the good of the nation, he should be allowed to retire permanently.

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Dirty word

VIEWPOINT

Juan V. Mercado

"LUXURY" IS A DIRTY WORD IN THESE PARTS of the woods. Not so, ranger Ens. Jose Tantoy Gorp Asst. Assn Peace Parish's (free logo online at PA-1978 licenses since first straddles protected crests of the country's last old-growth forests to human ATTC claims it works by "sustainable management."

Bought in 1977 by then-tutorial-law Defense Minister Enrile, ATTC got the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to cut only a logging moratorium. The first officer when the Mount Wildlife Fund (WWF) found it "one of the top 200 endangered spaces to be explored."

Catholic bishops, green groups and tenacious environmentalists first drew threats or one of the world's richest biodiversity pools. Exactly 800 of Samar's more than 1,000 species of flowers, bloom nowhere else, and it has 10 species of mammals and 105 birds. Many are endangered. "The present pool has no wildlife value," marvels Food and Agriculture Organization lawyer Patrick Dave.

To protect this critical resource, the EO Environment Program, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the government launched the Samar Island Natural Park. But government-at-arms ran-here with the left hand what it hands with its right. Here, the DENR pulled the big lever—and awarded ATTC—known for its rapid and free manners. Environment Secretary Mike Defensor's Aug. 16, 2005 order ranked this as the first ATTC "extension of permit of cut" TLA agreement to the vote lapsed from 31 May 1984 until promulgation of the order."

Extension contributed "irreparable" risk to the Nature, assured the Samar Island Biodiversity Foundation in a letter to senators, church leaders and NGOs. "Extension of a TLA to 'reclaimed' never happened in the Philippine forests," "reclusive president, Agnes Devadula.

"Restoration," the secretary says, "is making good for injury done." In a country where either year, the idea of making good for harm inflicted on the forest floor the closure of logging companies needed.

Some did it the "Luichoco procedure." In Lubo's account, the ear ordinary Luichoco pledged before the Manila: "Half of my profit, I'll put it to the poor. And if I've cheated anyone, I pay him back four times as much." This four-fold restitution is mandated by 7th Commandment. "This should not exist."

In an Orwellian country, like the Philippines, some people are more equal than others. It's something unnecessary dominates here. By mandating environment friendly, community economic goals all consumers within reach. The Ten Commandments are watered down to the "Ten Suggestions."

The result is a moral vacuum. A short one "economics"—corrupt culture the other—and in The powerful monopolize the [illegible] president has done it to the weak. Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. and Marcos cronies wouldn't be bothered with "restitution" for swinging under imperialism. Ms. Arroyo strives to maintain current balance.

Defensor's order, in effect, turns over ATTC has been prejudiced and is entitled to "reconstitution"—by extension of its terms. Who inflicted the harm? The Catholic bishops of Calbayog, Catarman and Borongan who supports with by-laws resistant? The DENR?

Who celebrates the virtue of "conservation"? ATTC?

And how? Is open hearings? Or was all this a secret, as Orson Franks said, "in the Oxford sense—you may tell it only to one person at a time"?

Fairness is often the first victim in smoke-filled backroom negotiations, said the Catholic bishops' pastoral letter opposing ATTC's claim to "paso rights" across the same terrain. This "right of passage"—down and rather your passion or interest— The people of Samar have many other rights... Aquino declares that the natural wealth of Samar Island benefit Samar's people.

A man named Muslim

THERE'S THE RUB

Commodo de Quitco

SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF the Muslims from Borneo.

A couple of years ago, Malacañang ordered a search committee to choose the next president of the MSU to succeed Dr. Cesar A. Saloja. Like the University of the Philippines, and to a lesser from war, the MSU is a public Un appointed to patient's automatic. Unlike UP however, whose president is elected by the board of regents, the MSU's president is merely appointed by Malacañang. One is at pains to understand the logic of this, enough to insist one wonder if it isn't the unwanted? Just enough lurid belief that Mindanaoans, specifically Muslims who have found their voice in the MSU, cannot be trusted to choose wisely amongst themselves the kind of their primary academic incumbents.

The search committee, headed by former OPAS Director Carmencita Ondoy, after much interviewing, consulting and vetting, unanimously picked Macapado A. Muslim as its first choice. Some 21 candidates applied for the position, and Muslim came up heads and shoulders above the nearest rival. The rest seemed dwarf.

Mac, this is not a country that is known to have visible demands of logic and reason. One of the blue and completely consuming the search process is superfluous and costly exercise good for by the taxpayer. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo chose instead in the next MSU president Ricardo P. de Leon. In the past, Philippine presidents exercised their prerogative to choose the president of MSU, but never always the university community's No. 1 choice. But their choices were always someone who had appeared on the search committee's short list. Dr. Leon had not. In fact, he had not even applied there. He wasn't in contention at all.

Who are Macapado Muslim and Ricardo de Leon?

Muslim is a native of Bulmay City and is himself a graduate of the MSU. He got his MS in public administration from UP and his MA and Ph.D. in political science from the University of Hawaii in an East-West Center scholar. He has taught in the MSU since he came back and has been a chancellor of MSU-Gensan. Issues for newcomers. In recognition of his prodigious contributions to his alma mater and to his community in general, the UP Diamond College of Public Administration and Governance gave him the Outstanding Alumnus Award last June.

Who can the other hand is Dr. Leon? Good question and one the MSU community itself has been asking in the last few months since the new damned Gloria's successor. Until then, no study on the MSU had heard of him. In fact, Dr. Leon is a general of the Philippine National Police and rose to his permanent academic position in the university only after he left the police service (with Gloria's help). He's enough though to make one suspect the reason why. Ready as his surname. Either that or she has a natural sympathy for people who have no mandate from their constituency.

The choice of Leon over the MSU from Dr. Leon's appointment led Malacañang not to announce him but to replace his note to assign position. That is to only on paper. Dr. Leon has contact our his duties as a regular president and merely completely oblivious to the responsibilities in his current title, which suggests what people one in the MSU already knows, which is clear he is currently trying to see the post. There's something there who is perfectly qualified for this role.

Faced with Gloria's choice, the university convinced Muslim to withdraw from the search and on Aug. 6, 2007, personally told him the new development. Muslim, however, refused to withdraw, saying he owed it to the search committee to see the process through to the end. Besides, he was confident that he would be appointed president of the MSU, so miles ahead in our words' time. What might have been a case of silly "still that study until, a needless waiting for many still felt that more debated was positive denied, but turned out to be a case of all's bad that ends well.

Muslim does not know what calculus Malacañang uses (in the in the known, both the Macapado Muslim and Ricardo de Leon) to arrive at their choice. Seven days and seven nights' time pass, and still Muslim is on to be told. Indeed, a full month has passed and still Muslim is out in the cold. By Muslim's account, he was approached by Francisco Secretary Eduardo Ermita after the meeting with GMA and was told by appointment was still undecided and he should still accept it. After a week, however, at the final close is unseemly, same to be so, he felt tired of the process and so he told Ermita, like his freedom who does have possessed the Diamond Lord by government, is still winning.

Meanwhile, Dr. Leon has been seen going around the MSU and outside of it soliciting signatures in support of his appointment. He appears to be an academic institution representing in great part to the Muslim community. I would still have preferred to a Macapado Muslim. Another thing being equal, or even others a slight inequality entails, I prefer to appoint women to responsibilities that have to do with women. Muslim is prominent academically recognized by others. Muslim is the one who has done to do that before to do that.

If this were a case of affirmative action, if a Muslim being appointed to the highest position of an academic institution representing in great part to the Muslim community, I would still have preferred to a Macapado Muslim. Another thing being equal, or even others a slight inequality entails, I prefer to appoint women to responsibilities that have to do with women. Muslim is prominent academically recognized by others. Muslim is the one who has done to do that before to do that.

If this were a case of affirmative action, this is a case where the person we would not affirmative. If so, behalf of a visible Moro, more qualified, more deserving, than the one you would thumb down on behalf of a higher purpose. No, even then this, this is a case where the person you would normally thumb down with much regret on behalf of a higher purpose is one you should really thumb down with much reservation in the name of merit, service and higher purpose. This is, in fact, a case of no reservation.

Only, you wonder, for the guy's sense?

E-mail: jacomar@skyinternet.com

Doña Luz's rare 'delicadeza'

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

COMELEC CHAIRMAN BENJAMIN ABALOS SR. REPEATEDLY insisted tonight that he has dropped a bit in health because the Comelec task force is working on the P28 billion automated election system deal. There appears to be some delusional ethical confusion on the part of Abalos, who should have been more comfortable about his health precisely because he has divested himself of the Comelec deal. Abalos has given the public the right to call Mayor Erap Estrada, over the decision assuming authority. Whether he was favored in exchange for political conduct has yet to be established, but it is clear to all that his continued presence is not to review but to rule out of order any challenges that may arise in the future.

The problem with this public assurance is twofold. Abalos should not, as his "prerogative," refuse to divulge people's names on the government contract until. In this context, he should not be "government." Plus is devoid of guile and corruption? Was the divestment only half-hearted, in which case Abalos seems to govern his "personal" interests as these questions are lost in the public's anguished by race tracks about Abalos. Strangely enough, for a Congressman so capable of hold-hearted, he surrendered under the sun, in case these areas rages to recall all those involved in the scandal, such as Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and Trade Secretary Peter Favila. They have said they are eager to cooperate with the Senate probe, but they are not candidate they could explain everything. Sadly, however, there's a hanging cloud on these and several others in later given way to the dues for Ideal.

President Ramon Magsaysay was instrumental in setting up the Postal Security System 50 years ago to protect the mails from spies. Now, it was fitting that former Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. was the guest of honor during one of the three days-of-the golden anniversary observances. Sen. Magsaysay recalled that after his father's untimely death in March 1957, private officials wanted to change his name Londuhre' name to Magsaysay but his mother, Luz, forbade. Magsaysay considered this as an opportunity for posterity's sake not to touch a cent of his name.

Gobi Abaya and I had this interviewing "Bambi King" Carlo J. Caparas and his business associate with Donna Villa on his version of the Philippine comics at a mid-mid point. Mabuhay has it a modeling agency. We have a lot of fun with the boundaries. "In Time and to Heal," was launched yesterday in the Supreme, and to be linked by no one, save to "a true story destined to endure forever." On Sept. 15, Caparas will be launching five of his comics, each seven issues each (at only P15 per copy). "Pilipino Classics," "Pilipino Komiks," "Pilipino Komiks," "Pilipino Komiks" and "Super Pilipino Komiks." Those will feature Captain Barbell, Kapitan Gagamboy, "Darna," "Dyesebel" and "Lastikman" and "Bongasa." The komiks' true version should be unbiased by governments of Pinoy who grew up on all those. Prices remain here expected to be this last 10 years unless Caparas, who had just

The good father

FOR ALMOST ALL OF THE 20 YEARS OF MY LIFE, I CRISS up with a father who most of the time, if not always, prevailed me my siblings and my mom all that we wanted and needed. During what time, even up to how I'd go... to school, to parties and even to family gatherings—everyone told me how good a provider my father was. So I gave up thinking that all it means to be a father was the capital provider.

It was only recently

In that I began to wonder if my father was right. Can we really be a father because he's the breadwinner, because the material things we have? Is what I need—that means of us—our fathers only as money-making machines who spit out cash when we need to buy or pay for something?

This question came to me when our family started to have financial problems. My father wasn't earning as much as he used to. Unpaid bills started to pile up. My mom was becoming anxious, wondering how we would pay our bills.

One afternoon, as we were having lunch at a fast food chain, I received a call from the local cable company to remind us that our bills were three months overdue. The person on the other end told me that unless they received payment within seven days, then we could be cut off.

At our house, we all were quiet. Even my parents began to have fights. You know how they hated each other. Just because they never both seemed each other the whole "crisis."

It was tough for us. At times, we would catch ourselves staring at each other and reminiscing about the old days—the days when we would party all night, the days when we would spend three rolls of pesos on groceries, on clothes, and the like, the days when we would go to fancy restaurants and have us different kinds of food from different cuisines. Indeed, those were the days.

As the months rolled by, there was a dire improvement in the financial situation of our family. I started thinking that perhaps with fifteen machines who were in the same fix. They said it was our fathers' fault because had they found other means of livelihood or had they worked harder, we would not be in the situation we were in.

For a while I wanted to agree with them. I was inclined to put all the blame on my father for my troubles. I would have willingly taken had never been my mother's and brought me more family into such a situation.

However, by some instant work of fate, my perspective changed. One time, I suppose had no father to ask for me differently. That request returned to bear to him at a school, and he dropped the newspaper he was reading. He motioned which for a supporting man it was always for who would give me siblings and me our allowances. From the emotion on his face, I knew he didn't have the money. All he said was, "Ahh ... there's a hundred pesos on top of the TV set."

I found the hundred pesos on top of the TV set on top of the TV set one P50 and two P20 bills. It was P10 less than what I had thought he had.

At first, I thought it was unbelievable. But it was what I saw on my father's face. I knew I had to accept the fact that we were all that he had.

It was then and that I took his son my father's words. It he taught me in the realization that my father is a human being, and not some monster, making merchise. Most importantly, it made me see that I have a father who's always there to support his family, a father who works hard to avoid his children from hunger, a father who would do everything for his family, a father who loves all of us.

The incident told me how much my father is willing to give to us, to his love overlooking for him. The fact that he stayed with us during those trying times was enough. The fact that he was there to give his verbal support to his family was enough. The fact that he was there to give his verbal support to his family was enough. Being a father doesn't mean earning millions. It's more than that.

Now I don't need anyone to tell me how good a father is to, because I know it by heart and I can say it myself. My father is indeed brilliant.

Kir Is Aaron C. Benjoin, 20, is an Ateneo de Manila University student.

YOUNG BLOOD

Kuelo Aaron C. Benjoin

We want to know what the young are thinking about. Tell us your thoughts on current issues. Or, send us contributions from the many things that affect our youth.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail or youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school you're in and your family's contact no. If printed, the person you're writing and the company you work with. Letters, features or thoughts should not have been previously published.

Songs, dances and memories of Cebu

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

NOT ONLY DOES CEBU HAVE TWO "FIESTA songs"—the older pop tune whose refrain goes "Cebu! Cebu! Everyday hanging to see Cebu" and the more recent "Sinulog"—but it also has its own folk song. Cebuanos ("Sinulog" Melodia' Sinulog Sa Sugbuanong"), as well as an "official" choreography for the second song—but in every town or city around the island, the "Sinulog" is danced to the tune of the "Sinulog Sa Sugbu" (or the "Sinulog Sa Cebu" if you're not an island, it's elaborate!

The Cebuanos's penchant for the "festivity" part of the city's celebrations is evident in the several evening of the week in Santacruzan on Barangay Mandaue, where we were welcomed by schoolchildren in bright open costumes with "this" and "Sobsob" dances. Then a grade school in Pardo, a suburb of Cebu to the parish church of Saint Peter and Paul. Pilipino Zoo, Green Garden and Mayor Garcia Executive Country resident displayed their dance moves, their costumes and their energy (and, in the case of government schoolchildren, who hardly gained the parents and began to like the hands of everyone in our country).

What was surging as we made our way to the town, where Vicente Rama, the town's administrative officer, gave us some background on the parish and church, which is more than a hundred-year-old and houses the historic relics among all Cebu churches, and invited us to visit the small museum on the second floor.

AFTER A brief visit to the market where we grabbed pasalubong of dried mangoes, dried fish, the source for the famous fish of Cebu, as well as the "egg capital" of the Visayas), it was time for dinner and a grand show by the place, dominated by a beautiful mansion, the Cebu Provincial Capitol, a neoclassical gem, in a group of "nation's firsts."

Cebu, they wanted to name his hometown of Castillejos after him, but again Doña Luz said no. Finally, they insisted on renaming just the barangay where Ed was born, and she grudgingly agreed. That was an example of delicadeza, which should put to shame so many public liars who have no qualms changing street names or naming buildings after members of their families.

The danger is constantly changing the names of our old streets is that our people, already bereft of a sense of history, could suffer an even worse case of historical amnesia. Saving our propensity to change street names, a Malacañang friend once said we should just assign only even roads and give them any name we want. Makes sense.

Gobi Abaya and I had this interviewing "Bambi King" Carlo J. Caparas and his business associate with Donna Villa on his version of the Philippine comics at a mid-mid point. Mabuhay has it a modeling agency. We have a lot of fun with the boundaries. "In Time and to Heal," was launched yesterday in the Supreme, and to be linked by no one, save to "a true story destined to endure forever." On Sept. 15, Caparas will be launching five of his comics, each seven issues each (at only P15 per copy). "Pilipino Classics," "Pilipino Komiks," "Pilipino Komiks," "Pilipino Komiks" and "Super Pilipino Komiks." Those will feature Captain Barbell, Kapitan Gagamboy, "Darna," "Dyesebel" and "Lastikman" and "Bongasa." The komiks' true version should be unbiased by governments of Pinoy who grew up on all those. Prices remain here expected to be this last 10 years unless Caparas, who had just

For 87 years, as Standard Columnist Fel Maragay noted yesterday, komiks drawn ribald here, perpetuated both by vice rich and the poor, which at many as 250 titles in circulation and selling for 300,000 to 500,000 copies a day. But even then, with their comparatively low mass readership and low literacy rates, the Philippines' komiks industry was already a "pot-luck time." He has earned a lot of money and recognition from what NEXA Executive Director Cecilia Alvarez terms "flamboyant dresses." The latest accolade was the President and Medal of Merit which President Diosdado Macapagal-Arroyo conferred last February on Caparas and the founding fathers of the Church, a televised Crushing of "Pedro Penduko" fame. Antonio "Antipuro of "Hija Ilalabalagbasa Sembra," "Ikot Ikwala el "Dama," and Lamy Medina of "Aksyong Alamat" and "Wakasan Ang Kalbo" have "flamboyant by" sound Caparas. "I'm the only one among them still around," brother acrobats he stopped last year was the Cuz Pesos Pride.

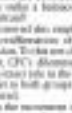
Even during peaceful times is that many Pinoy fi. Americans who made good in the United States are now eager to join the Joseda invited here and are sending their works from abroad.

To gauge public sentiment on arming the komiks and relink for inviting guest-makers of the art form, Carlo and Donna launched their "Komiks Konsult" with their children, CJ and Brock. They happily obliged to my request that I be a guest interviewer (usually especially young students) from they encouraged to be the artistic panelists. The executive Caparas long reminded is the medium of komiks, as it gives consumers "freedom" (detailed in the possibility to interpret not into three mental adventures such as the protection of the environment and old Pinoy values? The komiks king said he'll see to it that these are not in his books. Well, we'll see. Even more still, he added, komiks are have to continue

CFC: Between Jerusalem and Antioch

NEWSSTAND

John Nery



THE DUDE IS THE CHOSEN FOR CHRIST movement reaches us all—either because we are Filipino or because we are Catholic. In the late eighties century, this family-oriented Catholic movement—it is also a charismatic movement—in the Philippines has become a global phenomenon: over 1 million members, reaching millions more, with presence in 166 countries.

In the last half-decade, it has also become known for its controversies and ministers. Or maybe not. Mounting private tensions and successful General Bishops boasting internet as the work of CFC, but, in fact, in the quiet years of the upheaval.

It appears that two top CFC principles and two of late have not been observed: the Gospel Values, "those teachings with some responsibility for CFC seem to the Elders' assembly on June 7. "The appointed and pastor at each one of CFC must not be sacrificed for the sake of CFC. Nor should CFC be supported at the expense of the authority of the pastor." (The three were Bishop Gilbert Reyes of Sorsogon, CFC spiritual director; and Bishop Socrates Villegas of Legazpi, also CFC spiritual director.) Reyes, CBCP president, and Bishop Socrates Villegas of Legazpi, also CFC bishop in charge, discussed with CBCP/ISR on.)

Into a controversial direction in June the same month as Bishop Jose Sobrevinas, the only bishop elected CFC International Council, wounded the report. "The lovely pronouncements and a made of this Fresh Pentecost is not invisible gifts in the CFC community." It quoted Padilla. CFC's Bishop Socrates Villegas of Legazpi, also CFC spiritual director, said Bishop Socrates Villegas of Legazpi, also CFC bishop in charge, discussed with CBCP/ISR on.)

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The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Bolder steps needed to curb smuggling

THE GOVERNMENT ORGANIZED a big PR event to demonstrate to the public its determination to weed out smuggling in the country. Three surveillance machines destroyed smuggled luxury cars at the Subic Bay freeport. The idea was to snatch the car smugglers as expensive items.

But we at the Bad Trade Abstract (BadTrade) would like to ask: After the destruction of the smuggled vehicles, what next? Has smuggling stopped? Have the smugglers disappeared?

If the idea was to stop smuggling, the government should have limited itself to destroying the cars rather than burning them. By the destruction. Of course, the smugglers are worse than the likes Lapyal...for they kill not only dreams but actually steal. Most of Filipinos who are unable to find jobs due to the collapse of local industry and agriculture as a result of widespread and still unchecked smuggling. In addition, smuggling deprives the government enormity of at least P170 billion, not P66 billion, in foregone revenues.

The PR exercise was dramatic. With the cameras rolling, the machines did the attendees assured the Philippines without any intervention being required from the government's anti-smuggling czar. Anti-smuggling campaign as gun; credibility, the machines destroyed the cars, the names of the big time smugglers and enablers in the country. These smugglers and enablers should be put behind bars.

Without a name-and-shame campaign, the car destruction might end up as a rehash of what happened in Tacloban in 2006—the government raided and closed 108 Mall for being the country's biggest outlet for smuggled goods. Weeks after, the mall reopened; it has since been operating without any worries.

The government should go after the smugglers themselves, not settle after the smuggled goods.

BadTrade would like to reiterate these other proposals to curb smuggling.

1. Presidential Management Group should overtly an urgent drive against smuggling. Vice Pres. Teofisto Guingona, a similar bill passed the Senate but got pulled in the office of a pro-administration senator.

2. Congress should amend the Tariff and Customs Code and institute a system of increasing and updating import prices by adopting the real valuation methods and customs procedures adopted by China, India, the United States, the European Union and other developed countries.

3. The government should:

✦ Limit the customs-bonded warehouses (CBWs) to a number that can be effectively monitored and regularly audited. In 2003, only 79 CBWs were audited out of almost 1,000 operating (BWs).

✦ Overhaul the ineffective anti-smuggling control mechanisms in place at Subic, Clark and other economic and special zones.

✦ Penalize retailers and wholesalers of smuggled items.

The point is, no effective anti-smuggling campaign requires a 'scalp' and more concerted effort from the economic and legislative branches.

—AGUSTIN R. MENDOZA, convenor, Bad Trade Alliance
BadTrade@yahoo.com

BACKHOES readies to scrap smuggled vehicles in Subic Bay Freeport

On giving up a political career

FOR SOME SEN. PRIVILEGES, among many other material and psychological considerations associated with an elective political position, are indeed tempting. Many are those who enter the political arena in order to enjoy these advantages in the guise of helping their countrymen. Happily, there are others who are sincere in improving the people's lot.

A very popular senator of one of the country's biggest TV channels, with full knowledge that he would be confronted with tremendous odds—and against the advice of relatives—joined the political race in 2001 and won. This year's failure, the Good fellow, he is image conscious and relied a lot on the services David, Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada and Isko in Congress to serve the interests of his constituents. But, as fate would have it, he did not succeed in his objective—one of which was a law to boost the ailing economy making use of the main sources of income for his province: money—because of too much politics. He did not succeed in the election and went back to his first love, news broadcasting and journalism.

In one of his columns before the final curtain fell on the 13th Congress, he wrote: "Dahugas ka lang sana sa ang mo-abuhin ay ang tenor of Representatives ... kaligtasan sa pinipinsiyon ng bayan ng mahigit anim na dekada ng mga sawi at operasyonal, ipinatay pa kitang. Sayang talaga ang para ng bayan at tandaan mo ang sinasabi ng mga pinagpipitagan, tapos ay Alabang habang 8 pilot the dilemma of the House of Representatives ... an institution for whom the country is spending more than P6 billion every year. But much people's money wasted in an institution which is supposed to be indebted, but nation finds as a puppet," I indeed sincerely. Overhaul the institution or scrapped.

On the other hand, a former was state representative and a former Cabinet member, thought to have given up the political career after his campaign down an appointment by then President Estrada in 2000. Despite his anti-establishment, General Rodgarcia solicited but Fortunately that he was not successful in his bid for the 2004 elections, but his colleagues, family and friends already know of his plan. Apparently, some people perceived upon him so many he could also considered strategy of Manning City Coma February 2008, will be run for the 14th mid-term election again?

I believe that President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted to be a good leader. I wouldn't like her to be a leaving legacy to our people. It is only unfortunate that—even if it was meant to be spoiler—the heavens, in one of her speeches a month or two ago, that she will remain in power until 2010.

We know of many politicians who continue to cast their influence, either directly or by substitution. Will these politicians be able to give up their political careers to interests for the sake of our country and people? Will they allow the local government to serve the interests of the people?

—JESSE A. QUEBRAL, jerryquebral@yahoo.com

Building classrooms should be priority

THIS IS A REACTION TO THE commentary "The Cyber Education Project" by Eugenia Duenas. (Inquirer, 08/31/07, 12th Opinion, 08/31/07)

I definitely agree that "the wave of public education" woes...does are "truly mind-boggling," I don't blame the Department of Education for the problems it encounters, as to speak, to arrive at solutions. But with our many resources at our time, knowing P22 billion in the Cyber Education Project—with all the money, we're still far in the long run in ensuring quality education in all public schools in the country—to let the solution in the problem of poor quality of education are here today.

Time and again I have suggested to the DepEd that the key to improving our public school system is this time is the middle-level managers in the field—the principals of both elementary and high schools—meaning, the upgrading of their capabilities. Before they are assigned, they should be sent for some kind of management skills. Most of all, they should be told to remove their blinders and not be the mere, obedient followers of bureaucratic rules, regulations and procedures. Only then, I believe, they will be enabled to solve problems their schools face, with the resources at hand and with the help of parents and barangay officials. A case in point is the position of overcrowding at the beginning of every school year.

I live in Quezon City in spite of the massive school building programs of Mayor Sotto...this means for the past six years, there are still schools with principals packing pupils 60 to 70 plus in one room. The each school to the Old Balara Elementary School on Tandang Sora. I saw this for myself which I want to enroll my first child in Grade 1, and I was shocked when I saw this scene for myself. So my son is still in that particular day there were no lights and windows (less because of circuit overloading).

In connection to problem no.1, I note an urgent need to see the logistics, warning of a calamity or worse big to happen in case an earthquake, even if it would be unsung to enjoy, like the city on a busy week, day when 1,000 pupils are in the school. So no classes for 45 years, I suggested a solution. If the advice will be well taken, good, if not and something happens, the officials concerned should be made criminally liable.

The Cyber Education Project is good. But not at this time. Are you Fine things first.

—CHARLES D. SIMON, resident Quezon City
secondary school principal's
Emilia Imperial
Daniel Foundation,
11 alpha Rd., Alpha Village,
Capitol Hills, Quezon City

Corruption still No. 1 problem

IN A COUNTRY THAT PUTS cheap publicity stunts of presidentiables on prime time and front pages, the glad that someone like Gerardo de Quiros consistently writes about what matters most.

In his latest article about our educational mantling, De Quiros fearlessly points out that corruption is really at the core of our problem in education. ("Let them be light," 9/2/2007, A-23).

I agree that corruption has created countless Filipinos not only of classrooms and the right educational tools, but also of their dreams and future. Too many of our countrymen have been brainwashed into thinking that graduate parents can be found in menial jobs abroad. "Education makes a people easy to lead/Too difficult to drive, easy to govern/Too impossible to enslave," it is quite hard not to notice that now.

How convenient and easy it is to buy votes and endure an ignorant society that doesn't even know what to demand from its leaders. Such leaders know that it is a position to demand from its government.

I hope officials of the Department of Education consider De Quiros' views and find the courage to actually do something about the problems facing our educational system.

—RAMON FRANCIS ESTRELLA, mandaueneyes@yahoo.com

Uncomfortable memories

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.,
John J. Carroll Institute
on Church and Social Issues

I CAN STILL RECALL A SIT-uation and how I thus heard of the Philippine "martial law" in its implementation, and almost the very words in which the news came; just as I can recall where I heard of John F. Kennedy's assassination, and of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. Perhaps it was the shock of the news that caused it to stick in my memory; in the case of Ninoy I remember asking myself, "Would they go this far?" I now ought of them?"

But there was also the sense that these were starting points in history that things would never be quite the same again. This was confirmed by what followed in the case of Ninoy. First, there was a three-day homage in Metro Manila, which has never been adequately explained. As I see it, it was a spontaneous outpouring of the sense of being in a dark room, supposedly alone, but then becoming aware of another presence in the room, an evil presence. This was a reaction, I surmise, of a general awareness of the evil at the heart of the society which surrounded us. My own personal fears were in similar feelings.

But then things began to change as Filipinos reacted with defiance to the evil. Long lines formed on Times Street as hundreds of thousands stood in the sun and the heat for a chance to express the body of one whom they never coming to see as a martyr. Then pulled up at 4 a.m. and there always seem to my pay their respects. T-shirts appeared with the message "his graves have had only tourists—give us life for the nation."

It came to a climax in the funeral Mass, the magnificent homily by Jaime Cardinal Sin, and the mile-long procession to the cemetery. The cardinal pictured the soul of Ninoy departing for the Father's house but turning to ask for the gift of peace, even for his countrymen who killed him. Instead of the applause and standing ovation that followed, the cardinal's words were met with a stunned silence. It was as if the people were saying, "Not yet, Father, not yet!"

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But there was also the sense that these were starting points in history that things would never be quite the same again. This was confirmed by what followed in the case of Ninoy. First, there was a three-day homage in Metro Manila, which has never been adequately explained. As I see it, it was a spontaneous outpouring of the sense of being in a dark room, supposedly alone, but then becoming aware of another presence in the room, an evil presence. This was a reaction, I surmise, of a general awareness of the evil at the heart of the society which surrounded us. My own personal fears were in similar feelings.

But then things began to change as Filipinos reacted with defiance to the evil. Long lines formed on Times Street as hundreds of thousands stood in the sun and the heat for a chance to express the body of one whom they never coming to see as a martyr. Then pulled up at 4 a.m. and there always seem to my pay their respects. T-shirts appeared with the message "his graves have had only tourists—give us life for the nation."

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US facility in Southern Philippines a military base

WE AT FOCUS ON THE GLOBAL South, the international think tank that claims that the United States is building a military base in Mindanao in violation of the Philippine Constitution. Adam the following:

• Why is the Philippines listed by the US Overseas Basing Commission (OBC), an obscure US government body, as developing "cooperative security locations"—a category of bases under US military definition?

• Why has the Philippines been classified by the US Congressional Research Service, a US government body, as a "supplier for military operations throughout the region"?

• Why has a US base source document, the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, given a $600-million, six-month contract to US-based Fluor Corporation to finance, design, construct and operate "temporary facilities—and" ...to date, therefore the facilities—and?

• Why do US troops refer to their bases in Mindanao as "Kandahar" and "Forward Operating Base (FOB)"?

Focus on the Global South believes these comments with the practice of the United States and host governments in other countries that have US forces facing determined opposition, the United States and the Philippine governments are deliberately seeking to keep the nature of US military presence in the Philippines secret.

Part of this is a deliberate attempt to obfuscate the definition of what constitutes a "US base." This stands because US troops and supplies make base-access facilities, as is the case in Southern Philippines, and as has been been confirmed by Adan. But for all intents and purposes, Focus on the Global South believes that the nature of the US military presence in the Philippines constitutes a form of basing.

According to the US Department of Defense's definition, "Cooperative Security Location"—which the Philippines has been established by the OBC as its hosting—are facilities ostensibly owned by host governments that would only be used by the United States because of sensitivities, though they could be visited and inspected by the United States, they would more likely be run and maintained by host-nation personnel. Such facilities would however, useful for pre-positioning logistics support or to ensure for joint operations with host militaries. They are, however, considered as US military facilities by the Pentagon.

—RODERIC MOLINA, Focus on the Global South,
39 Magindanao St.,
UP Village, Quezon City

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2bU! SPORTS

Comelec to look into Abalos case

By Beverly T. Mabinidad
and Norman Bordadora

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (Comelec) will study whether the controversial National Broadband Network (NBN) project violated election laws, and if any election offense was committed by Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. for his alleged role in the $329-million contract.

Comelec Commissioner Rene Sarmiento told reporters yesterday that the Comelec would look into the form of the case to determine if the NBN deal's signing within the election campaign period violated the Omnibus Election Code.

Outside the Comelec office in Intramuros, Manila, the Provisions from Debt Coalition (PDC) staged a rally to call for an "independent and impartial investigation" of Abalos for his alleged brokering of the NBN deal.

"It is deplorable that the very head of the institution that should strictly prohibit government agencies from entering into contracts during election campaign period was the very same person who reportedly brokered the deal," the PDC said in a statement.

Asked if Abalos' alleged participation in the deal amounted to an election offense as described under the Omnibus Election Code, Sarmiento said the law covered all public officials.

"It is useful refer to any one of us...the Chair, or any commissioner—or to any other public official to other government agencies," he said.

The Omnibus Election Code, under Article 23, Section 261, Paragraph V, prohibits the release or disbursement or expenditure of public funds from government contracts.

"We will study that. The law prohibits any release, disbursement of public funds...but we still have to study if the prohibitions also applies even if there was no release of funds," said Sarmiento, noting that nothing is categorical at the moment because the poll body has no sufficient data yet.

While the applicable provision in the Omnibus Election Code, and Comelec Resolution No. 7795, which fleshed out the provision, prohibited the release of public funds during an election period, they did not mention if a mere signing or a brokering of a contract was also a violation, according to Sarmiento.

But he did not elaborate on whether this election offense, if eventually proven, could be an impeachable offense for the Comelec chair.

"We leave that to Congress to study" he said.

Sarmiento said the poll body members were not yet fully apprised of the allegations against Abalos and were still monitoring the "unfolding drama."

"We are concerned because they are talking about the Comelec again. People have a bad perception of the Comelec again," he said.

But he said the Comelec, under its rules, may conduct a preliminary investigation motu proprio (on its own initiative) or upon the filing of a case to find out if an election offense was committed.

Meeting with Town

In the House of Representatives, Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said he had met with ZTE Corp. executives twice—at his house in Ayala Alabang last year and at the Wack Wack Golf Club in Mandaluyong City a few months ago.

On both occasions, Teves said, Abalos was present.

Teves said that at the meeting last year, he discussed with ZTE officials a project in Mindanao.

At the other meeting, the Finance secretary said he discussed with ZTE executives the NBN contract.

On the sidelines of the budget hearings at the House, Teves said the ZTE deal had yet to be perfected because the loan agreement had not been signed by the Philippine and Chinese governments.

"What we have is a... supply contract, which still has to be executed without a loan agreement," he said.

From page A1

conflict and of helping ZTE win the NBN contract in a privilege speech, which protects him from suit.

The elder Abalos, a golf enthusiast, admitted last week that he accepted free trips to China from ZTE officials, rather local favorites his friends and golfing buddies.

However, he said he did not involve the NBN deal, saying he was not powerful enough to do that.

The Comelec chair said the Chinese executives were probably compelled to provide him with gifts and free trips so he should avoid their bills when they came to Manila and played at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The mayor said he was more than by the allegation that his father left his mother in Hong Kong for a type with Chinese women paid for by ZTE.

Pissed off

He said the claim, which accounted for almost one-fourth of Boudoir's column, was below the belt and insulted her.

"I'm not 'pikon' to say that I am not affected," he said. "I saw my Dad distressed. And actually, I was angry when I heard about the accusations. It pissed me off," he said.

The lawyer also said the issue had driven a wedge between his family and the De Venecias.

Mayor Abalos pointed out that if there was anyone who needed to be investigated, it should be the son of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., who sportsbined the NBN deal.

Jun "Joey" de Venecia III is a cofounder of Amsterdam Holdings Inc., which offered an unsolicited bid for the NBN project last June.

Manchie and Gina

The rift between the Abalosses and the De Venecias had affected other family members outside politics, the mayor said.

His wife Member and Gina de Venecia, the Speaker's wife, were "very close" as they were both members of the Iloilo Buddha sa Ayala Foundation.

The mayor said the controversy had strained the relationship of the two women.

Both Member and Gina suffered from the extremely diseño of their daughters and the boundaries in helping them cope with the loss, according to Abalos.

Mother taking it in stride

The mayor said his mother Gina has learned to take the controversy in stride.

"When my mother learned about the sexcapade, she just smiled. If it were I, my wife would stand me. They know that I am capable and say 'Dad isn't capable,' a shocking Abalos said. "My father is a one-woman-man," he said.

The younger Abalos also aired doubts on the motives of Boudoir and Padilla, noting that Boudoir's wife is a relative of the De Venecias and that Padilla is a protégé of the Speaker.

He also noted that Iloilo Rep. Exequiel Bañolo, a former congressman, was elected to succeed the Joey de Venecia.

Bañolo has asked the Supreme Court to stop the implementation of the NBN project.

"Diri pisu ena gihat sina pisu nga sapak lang," he said.

Contrary to reports, Abalos said it was not true that his father was angry and aware at Joey.

If the Comelec chair had something against the De Venecia family, he would have voted for the disqualification of the Speaker in the case filed against him before the May 14 elections, the mayor said.

"This could have been done the other way around," he said.

ALLEGATIONS of "sexcapades" involving Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. (in the background) have upset his son, Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos.

Young Abalos cries foul over 'sexcapades' charge

Trader to testify against Abalos

From page A1

Padilla also claimed that the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) "discriminated against and deliberately influenced on the proposal" of ZTE.

ZTE yesterday said it did not enjoy undue advantage over ZTE and Amsteam in winning the NBN contract.

"Since March of this year, ZTE's participation in the proposed NBN project has been subjected to malicious and unjustified attacks by other parties. We have been quiet because we know these are all baseless accusations," ZTE said in a statement.

The statement went further, saying the public is "aware the truth. There was complete transparency to the proposal, evaluation and approval of ZTE's application for the Philippines' NBN contract," the Chinese company said.

ZTE revealed more on allegations that is bribed Philippine government officials to bag the contract.

Last hurrah

The businessman said De Venecia was having breakfast with Abalos and some of his friends at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City sometime in December last year when the Comelec chair invited the Speaker's son in his private office at the golf club, of which Abalos is president.

The businessman said the trio talked about the NBN deal.

"Sang idea is my last hurrah. I have nothing to do after Comelec. I really want this contract. I'm willing to give you $50 million," Abalos is due to retire in February 2008.

The businessman said the bribe would come from the coupons of the ZTE deal.

AM and Arescom offers

The businessman said De Venecia turned down the offer, insisting that his front's offer was better because it does not require a sovereign guarantee.

AM offered $240 million, and Arescom, $139 million.

The businessman said ZTE had proposed $262 million for the project, including $110 million in the cost of the actual equipment.

Upon Abalos' suggestion, the ZTE contract was upgraded to $329 million, according to the source.

The NBN project is one of the target beneficiaries of the $1.4-billion loan agreement between the Philippines and China.

The Philippine government and the Chinese Export-Import Bank signed the deal without fanfare on Aug. 25 on the sidelines of the Asean Economic Ministers meeting at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati.

In response to Abalos' concern about being jobless after his retirement, De Venecia offered him a seat on the AM board or even on its club meetings, according to the source.

Trip to Shenzen

Apart from the six meetings in Wack Wack, Abalos invited De Venecia to join him in Shenzen, China, to meet with ZTE officials.

De Venecia agreed, and met with Abalos and the ZTE officials in a hotel in Shenzen on Dec. 27 last year.

The source said Abalos pressured De Venecia as "my patron and the son of the Speaker."

De Venecia flew separately with Abalos, who went to Shenzen two days ahead.

Most powerful man

At the hotel meeting, the businessman said Abalos bragged before De Venecia and the ZTE officials that he could secure the contract because of his powers as chair of the Comelec.

"I'll be the most powerful man in the Philippines starting Jan. 15 because I'm the Comelec chair," the businessman quoted Abalos as saying.

The Comelec chair meant to say that no politician could challenge his decisions during the campaign period for the 2007 midterm elections.

Asked why De Venecia agreed to the Wack Wack and Shenzen meetings with Abalos, the businessman said it was in deference to the Comelec chair's position.

First proponent

In the ZTE testimony, sales director Dong Shuanin said the company was the first proponent of the NBN project, contrary to allegations by competitors.

He said ZTE submitted its original proposal to the CICT (Commission on Information and Telecommunications), the original shepherd of the NBN project, in April 2006.

ZTE claims to have started pitching its idea for NBN around this time before submitting its formal proposal in December 2006.

"It (ZTE proposal) went through a six-month evaluation from CICT, Neda (National Economic and Development Authority) had the proposal for six months as well, and for four months the papers were with the DOTC for evaluation and comparison to the other proposals which incidentally were late in submission," Shuanin said.

Most comprehensive

For his part, Howard Tan, ZTE global marketing director, said the company offered the most comprehensive and responsive proposal to help meet the Philippine government's ICT infrastructure requirements.

Tan said the ZTE proposal would cover first- to sixth-class cities and municipalities after only 18 months of the project's launch.

To bridge the digital divide and promote e-government, the Philippine government needs network availability to remote areas with reasonable-quality communication, according to Tan.

"This can never be achieved unless it builds and operates the system itself, because private telecom operators do not provide the required services to the (poorest) fifth- and sixth-class municipalities, and only partially to fourth-class municipalities since it is commercially unprofitable to operate in such areas," he said.

Tan said ZTE's proposed NBN network would cater exclusively to the government, completely integrating all government communication infrastructure. "Clearly, our NBN has no intention of taking away the business from existing private telco entities (the proposals of other companies," he said.

Tan was alluding to AMS proposal to offer commercial telecom services while exclusively servicing the government's telecom needs.

AMS's proposal to lease all landline, cellular and Internet assets of the national and local offices across five- and second-class municipalities.

Arescom proposed commercially up to the third-class municipalities using voice over Internet protocols.

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Subic firm settles oil import taxes

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—AN OIL TRADING FIRM made a tax remittance of P30 million yesterday amid accusations by authorities that it failed to account for 127.5 million liters of gasoline and diesel from October 2006 to June 2007.

The Tri-Solid Mercury Services Inc. has paid P19 million two weeks ago. Its payment yesterday brought to P30 million the amount it needed with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and the Bureau of Customs.

SBMA Administrator Armand Arreza said he was "not aware" of the payments because the settlement procedure was under the BoC.

Tri-Solid's independent customs broker, Bernabe Atienza, remitted the P30 million payment yesterday.

Reconciliation

Marietta Zamoranos, Subic customs collector, heads a task force auditing Tri-Solid's importation and withdrawal transactions. She was in Manila when the payment was made.

"The ongoing reconciliation between the SBMA customers and the company's official reports was requested by Tri-Solid immediately after having been appraised by third party sources of accusations of oil smuggling being made against the company without the benefit of a formal audit," a statement from Tri-Solid said.

Tax exemption

Tri-Solid imports gasoline and diesel oil from Malaysia and Singapore and sells them to power plants and other industrial locators in the free port.

Under the Tax and Duty Free Law, companies operating in the free port are exempted from paying taxes, duties and other charges on importations of goods, provided that these are not sold, traded or transferred to any person or entity in the Philippine customs territory.

Tri-Solid's shipments are delivered to the free port through the Subic Bay International Terminal Corp. (SBITC) and Subic Bay Industrial Terminal Inc. (SBITI).

Tri-Solid's independent customs broker, Bernabe Atienza, remitted the P30 million payment yesterday.

Zamoranos said the BoC was also investigating the alleged tax evasion of Tri-Solid.

Arreza said if the firm was found to have committed fraud, the BoC should impose penalties as well.

"Much of the petroleum products were brought out without quedan papers not built in to support the suspicion that these might be fraud," he told the Inquirer.

"I want to see the system work. These hoarders are ours. It would encourage other firms to do the same," he said, referring to the anti-smuggling and import regulation measures of the government.

Eduardo Malso, the person listed as president of Tri-Solid, did not answer the Inquirer's calls seeking confirmation on the settlement proceedings.

No answer

Jose Calimlim, who has control of the SBMA's seaport deputized unit and the Task Force Subic, denied having any hand in the supposed oil smuggling.

The only known case filed against the Tri-Solid was for falsification of official and public documents and for fraudulent customs practices.

The Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group, formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo in May, filed the case on July 16.

Arreza said the "voluntary payment made by Tri-Solid is welcome as it indicates a willingness on the part of the company to settle its tax obligations."

"But until the BoC completes its final assessment, it would be difficult to say whether the amount is sufficient or not," Arreza said.

Audit report

A July 16, 2007, report of the special audit mission created by Arroyo and Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales showed that Tri-Solid had an "undeclared volume" of 19,497,892 liters of gasoline and diesel.

The audit team arrived at the figures by comparing the reports of the SBMA, BoC, Tri-Solid and Philippine Coastal Storage and Pipeline Corp., a company that leased the fuel tanks to Tri-Solid. The discrepancies appeared when the reports were validated.

A CHECK FOR P29 million is submitted to Tri-Solid to the customs office in Subic Bay as payment for taxes that it was accused of not paying on time.

Students lose cell phones to 'teacher'

LUCENA CITY—A VOLUNTEER teacher at the Lucena City National High School (LCNHS) is now wanted by authorities after he allegedly stalked his students into surrendering their personal belongings to him before disappearing.

A LCNHS faculty identified the unit teacher as Bernabe Capistrano who applied last month as a volunteer teacher and was assigned to teach English subjects in the 1st and 4th year classes.

"He had with him complete documents like his educational requirements. The school even called up his alma mater for verification. His school confirmed his graduation," said another teacher who requested anonymity as she was not authorized to speak on the matter.

The informant said the new faculty member had impressed upon school authorities that he was willing to assist in conducting experiments for a supposed job with tech in Macau.

"I even lobbied him on how overseas I was for his impending job abroad," said the teacher.

The source said that in one of Capistrano's classes, he asked a photography project using mobile phone cameras and asked his students to borrow and bring phones the next day.

After the project the next day, Capistrano allegedly collected the units and distributed them to students supposedly to have the pictures taken in their cameras developed in the city. He volunteered to pay for the photo development.

"He took photos of the class using all the mobile phones. He returned those with few resolution," said the teacher.

The volunteer teacher even managed to bid goodbye to his fellow faculty members before he disappeared.

"He showed up at the faculty room and told us that his brother had just arrived and was waiting at the gate to hand him some snacks. He left but no longer returned," said the informant.

All efforts to locate Capistrano, including contacting his relatives, proved futile, said the teacher.

It was learned that aside from the four mobile phones, Capistrano borrowed one iPod and MP3 units from his fellow volunteer. Jeoffle T. Mediodia, Inquirer Southern Luzon

POWERFUL IMAGE
This magnificent view reveals much more than the tourism potentials of the Chico River. The Local Tourism Office urges town officials to preserve the mountain ranges that serve as a natural boundary between Kalinga and Mountain Province to draw more investment from the area.

2 Moro rebs killed in clash with militiamen

DATU ODIN SINSUAT—TWO MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels were killed while three others were wounded in a clash with militiamen in Datu Piang, Maguindanao on Sunday.

Lt. Col. Danilo Garcia, commander of 603rd Infantry Brigade, told the Inquirer that militiamen clashed with MILF rebels who allegedly entered the village of Barangay without prior coordination.

"They were sidelining Islamists in the community. We are not against that. But the manner they carry out does not conform to the terms of reference with our ceasefire agreement with them. They did not coordinate with our troops in the area," Garcia said.

"We filed a protest yesterday with our ceasefire committee," he added. Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao

Panlilio stands by 2 of his most trusted aides

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—IN an apparent bid to end an election debacle that has may by Vice Gov. Eddie Panlilio's camp and the provincial board, Pampanga Gov. Ed-die Panlilio has issued a memorandum asserting the legality of the appointments of two of his most trusted assistants.

In Memorandum Order No. 8, Panlilio, a Catholic priest, appointed Bonifacio Sto. Rosario Jr. as "executive assistant to the governor" and lawyer Maria Elissa Yeste as provincial legal officer due to their being single persons and alleged lack of qualifications.

Firm

In the memorandum dated Aug. 29, Panlilio stood pat on his decision to retain Dabu and Yeste, saying their appointments have been "confirmed by operation of law."

He was referring to Section 963 (d) of the Local Government Code that says the board has 15 days to act on the appointments.

He said this was "evidenced by the issuance of the legal opinion of the Civil Service Commission and the Department of the Interior and Local Government."

"As stated by the DILG, since the appointments are confirmed, the appointments are already complete, there is no more legal impediment for the appointees to represent and perform the duties and functions of their respective offices," Panlilio said.

More urgent matters

"Resolution No. 956 being cited does not bind anyone and at best just an expression of concern and issues by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan pending no legal effect," he said.

The memorandum was addressed to "all department heads and employees, government agencies including private and government owned banks and other persons concerned."

Panlilio said he was "trying to put down this conflict because [he] has more urgent and the needs of our constituents are far greater and so are the time."

"I want us to move on. I am reiterating my appeal for them to trust my appointees because they do work hard and are so committed as I am in good governance," Panlilio said.

Independent candidate

He ran as an independent candidate in the May 14 elections and is doing now with a board dominated by the Kabalikat ng Mabuyang Pilipino aligned with defeated gubernatorial candidate Lilia Pineda.

Atty. Jerome Imson, Panlilio's Camille Go, OIC General Services director, said the appointments of Yeste and Dabu were "already deemed confirmed by the operation of Section 963 (d) of the Local Government Code of 1991."

But Cite said Dabu's case needs to question the qualifications of the appointees "may still do so by raising the issue before the CSC or under exceptional cases, even before the proper court."

CSC's Maria Cristina Cestina-Ho had asked, however, that the provincial human resource management officer, to issue a certification in lieu of the required resolution. This was because the "21-day requirement period for the [provincial board] has already lapsed."

The board has called all department heads and the managers of the provincial government's depository banks to attend its regular session today (Monday, Sept. 3) to "discuss the non-confirmation" of Dabu and Yeste. Rosario Dreza, Inquirer Central Luzon

PAMPANGA Gov. Eddie Panlilio is flanked by his two most trusted aides, lawyer Maria Elissa Yeste (left) and Vivian Dabu (right) whose appointments are being opposed by Panlilio's vice governor and provincial board.

NEWS

SWS: 60% of Pinoys think GMA 'toying' with Erap

By Norman Bordadora

IS OUSTED PRESIDENT JOSEPH ESTRADA A POlitical pawn being toyed with by his successor, President Macapagal-Arroyo? Almost 60 percent of respondents from Metro Manila and nearby provinces believe so, an opposition-commissioned Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey showed.

The opposition's confidential Project Thresher showed 58 percent of 500 respondents from the National Capital Region, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal agreed with the statement "President Macapagal-Arroyo is toying with former President Estrada."

Twenty-four percent disagreed.

The respondents were not swayed in the wake of reports that political pressure was being applied on the justices of the Sandiganbayan Special Division that tried Estrada for plunder over the past six years.

The Sandiganbayan court is expected to render a decision on Estrada's case this month.

The Inquirer obtained a copy of the survey commissioned by former Sen. Sergio Osmeña III last October to be proprietary rights so its full questionnaire may be released.

The Inquirer also reported last July that 40 percent of the respondents in "Mega Manila" believe Estrada should be given a presidential pardon "immediately" if the Sandiganbayan finds him guilty of plunder.

The Mega Manila survey was conducted by Pulse Asia, a private polling firm.

The United Opposition, on the other hand, has come out over the weekend with press releases saying Estrada enjoyed a much better trial ruling than Mr. Arroyo, and that Estrada has been forgiven for any wrongdoing by 73 percent of the 2002 survey respondents.

Reacting to the SWS survey, Osmeña said: "Ang pangit ng survey, ang pangit ng tanong, ang pangit ng sagot. Ang pangit ng lahat."

Osmeña said he would seek clarification from Pulse Asia on the survey.

Lost Miguel Arroyo "satisfied" themselves, in private than those who believe Estrada did so.

The SWS said it undertook the survey from July 15 to 20 and released all the pertinent results. It said the survey had a margin of error of plus or minus six percent.

"We still know that there is a political premium being applied on the justices of the Sandiganbayan. Don't ask me where I got that information but we all have our sources," Osmeña told the Inquirer.

He suggested that Estrada's trial media life ensure his 40th Anniversary. This can't afford that to happen. Of the respondents, 40 percent said he was not guilty, why was he sentenced in the first place? So I said let us see how the people feel about this," Osmeña said.

Osmeña said the opposition was rebooting the results of the survey because it wanted to see how much public support was given the impression.

"We will release the report in its entirety soon so that the people that we are not keeping [from] the results of the survey from them," he added.

"Those in the administration] were actually the first ones who came out with ads telling the people to just accept the Sandiganbayan decision on Erap. [Sen] to ask, what do the people think about these ads?" he said.

Osmeña said he needed quick feedback on the matter and this, he said, was one reason why the survey was conducted only in the Mega Manila area.

BANGKO KABAYAN CELEBRATES 50th ANNIVERSARY WITH GCASH

EXPANDING MICROFINANCE SERVICES THROUGH RBAP–MABS MOBILE PHONE BANKING

Globe

Rosales to Erap backers: Don't take to streets

By Beverly T. Hamsilad

MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUdencio Cardinal Rosales has appealed for solidarity from former President Joseph Estrada's supporters who are awaiting the Sandiganbayan's verdict in his plunder case.

In an interview yesterday, Rosales reminded Erap supporters that the truth cannot be proven in the streets, it is revealed in the life-teachings of a person.

"Halimbawa, kung ako ay mahatulan, sa kabuuan ko pinapatunayan kung ako ay matinong tao? Kaya kung meron tayong datos na nagsasabi sa kabuhayan ng isang tao, dito[tao o mamamayan], or dapat siguro tingnan natin yon [for example, if I am a good person, is that proven in the streets or here I live my life? So if we have a law that will investigate alleged acts of a person or offense, then we should respect it]," Rosales said.

Rosales said it was time Filipinos showed the laws and not flock to the streets whenever they disagreed with a decision or policy.

He asked the laity to remain sober during these times since Estrada's plunder case was "beyond politics," rather it was a case of morality.

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Autopsy: 'Heavy beating'

Cops to probe link between venue of alleged hazing, UP stude's death

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Tina G. Santos

THE FINDINGS OF AN AUTOPSY conducted by the Quezon City police on the body of University of the Philippines student Cris Aubrey Mendez yesterday confirmed suspicions that he was a victim of hazing.

According to the Quezon City Police District Crime Laboratory report, Mendez suffered "traumatic injuries on the upper and lower extremities" as characterized by bruises on his body—a signs of heavy beating.

The autopsy findings also showed that the victim had "contusion[Image" or bruises in his lungs, proof that he was hit hard on the chest or on the back.

According to a doctor asked by the heirs to autopsy the results, the bruises in the lungs could have been caused by injuries from chest or back which would have placed pressure on the lungs.

"The beating could have caused a blood clot to travel and ultimately obstruct a blood vessel, which could have directly caused the victim's death," the doctor said.

Meanwhile, police investigators said they had confirmed a report that a bruise in Quezon City was used by a fraternity for its initiation rites on Aug. 19 and 20.

Chief Insp. Leo Ebuang of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit told the Inquirer that the confirmation came from informants.

"Evidence left in the hotel room[was being treated inside the hotel on Sunday night (Aug. 26) and that it seemed that the police were now focusing on [a] hotel somewhere here as glad not to be giving," the official said.

Ebuang did not give the hotel's exact location to avoid affecting their investigation and follow-up operations. He only said that it was located in Barangay Bagong Tanay, Pagkilan.

He added, however, that they were still trying to determine the connection between these information and Mendez's death.

The victim was brought on Aug. 27 to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City a few minutes past 1 a.m.

An official of the National Bureau of Investigation said they would summon for questioning Dr. Perfecto Gran Jr., the assistant chief of the VMMC ophthalmology department who took Mendez to the hospital. Dr. Jerry Geronimo, VMMC administrative officer, Dr. Daphne Uneza, one of the hospital's doctors and Jonathan Cardoza, the security guard who[was on the victim was brought to the VMMC.

Lawyer Romulo Asis, chief of the PBI Intelligence Division, said they have issued subpoenas to at least seven people whom they believe could provide vital information on their investigation of the incident.

Also subpoenaed was Axel Pardo Jano, the National College of Public Administration and Governance student council chair and Sigma Rho member who was reportedly the last person seen with Mendez when he was still alive.

Miriam to push for abolition of fraternities, sororities

By Gil Cabacungan Jr.

A RESOLUTION HAS FILED IN THE SENATE yesterday calling for an investigation into the death of University of the Philippines student Cris Aubrey Mendez, allegedly a victim of hazing.

Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago, who filed Senate Resolution No. 112, said the findings would be used to beef up the Anti-Hazing Law or Republic Act No. 8049 which is awaiting in law, has proven to be useless in preventing hazing deaths.

She also said that she would push for the abolition of all fraternities and sororities.

Santiago was joined by Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, a member of the Sigma Rho fraternity at the UP Diliman-based University, which is believed to be involved in Mendez's death.

"My fraternity is becoming a matter of things and labels. A fraternity is a fraternity of people who embrace the profession of law. We should follow the law instead of relying to," Enrile said.

"I am in favor. I am going to fight for a bill to abolish fraternities and sororities," Santiago said. She noted that while the UP has instituted measures to discourage hazing, such is the automatic expulsion of a fraternity member involved in any activity that led to the death or serious injury of a student, these are not enough.

"I am going to ask for the definite abolition of all fraternities and sororities, and I challenge any student leader to debate me on this point. That new law will bind all academic institutions and the proper student regulations will be issued by the president or the dean," Santiago added.

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Chemicals warehouse destroyed in Caloocan City fire

By Henry C. Carvajal

21 FIRE FIGHTERS AT least three hours to put out a fire that broke out yesterday in a Caloocan City warehouse containing fuel and chemicals used in making plastic wares.

Chief Insp. Jaun Reyes, the city fire marshal, said the fire started at 6:15 a.m. at the brand-Lord warehouse on Gen. Luis Street in Bagbaguin.

It was placed under control at 7:40 p.m., but it took at least five hours more before it could totally be under control.

Reyes said Boots Ver, an undetermined number of drums containing fuel inside the warehouse owned by Alexander Ventura.

"The warehouse was being used as a repacking depot by Ilocos and for manufacturing. Farmers had to go from Ilocos instead of Metro to conduct the fire because of the presence of chemicals inside the warehouse.

"Our rescuer locked the front entrance and we had to ask for help from other Fire-Fighters to allow us to see from there," he said.

Firefighters from other cities in Metro Manila also rushed to the scene to prevent the fire from spreading to other factories and houses near the burning warehouse.

No one was reported hurt during the incident and Reyes estimated the damage to property at around P8 million.

'Green police' to crack down on Pasig smokers

By Kristine Alave and Tina Santos

SMOKERS ARE NOW NOT welcome in Pasig City after the local government prohibited lighting up in enclosed public spaces as part of its campaign to transform the city into one of the greenest in the country.

In yesterday's launch of Pasig Green City, Mayor Robert Sancho unscreened his subscription. Here's plans to save the quality of life in the city by making it more environment friendly.

For one, Sancho said the city government would crack down on smokers in public spaces such as malls, restaurants, hotels and bars as part of their properties to worsen pollution in the city and make the air safe for all.

The mayor has deputized 150 "Green Police" volunteers tasked to report to the city government violators of local and national environment laws.

"From smoking in public places will be banned. But we soon since we have just introduced this project, we are in the information campaign stage so violators will just get a warning. After that, the Green Police can start apprehending them," he said.

In Manila, Mayor Alfredo Lim warned that imposed a ban on the smoking and the sale of cigarettes at City Hall.

According to him, it was time for City Hall to become smoke-free to help promote wellness among employees and visitors.

Lim said that eventually a citywide ban on smoking in public places, including restaurants and public utility vehicles, would be imposed.

"We have to do it in a safe manner for other citizen and show them that we are serious in pursuing our campaign to make Manila a smoke-free city," he added.

Selling 'overpriced' property to government

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

HOW POWERFUL ARE INTELLIGENCE ELEMENTS? Retired Gen. "Mike" Z. Velarde still the government?

That question can be answered with the recent forthrich approval of the sale of 25 1,764 square meters of real estate he owned by the religious leader who founded the Catholic charismatic group.

On March 30, 1995, Velarde, through his company, Asset Land Development Corp., supposed to sell the property to the government at P1,227 billion.

On the same day, the deed of sale was executed between Astrod and the government.

Velarde on the same day, the deed of sale was executed between Astrod and the government.

Velarde's property, which had a market value of P4,000 per square meter at that time, was sold to the government at P15,105 per square meter. That's an increase of 240.77 percent!

Where is the property located?

It is still in Barangay San Dionisio, Parañaque City, off Sucat Avenue. Across the street is Asian Hospital. It's to the immediate portion of the main church.

The Department of Finance Order No. 16-98, pissed of property on Dr. A. Santos Avenue in the vicinity of Barangay San Dionisio have a market value of P4,500.

The order does not mention the interior lots in the vicinity of Barangay San Dionisio. But location of the government property. It is common knowledge that the lots in the interior portion are less than the lots with access.

Now, why did the government buy the property at a much higher price than the market value?

The answer is simple: It was owned by Mike Velarde.

While retired government employees are having a hard time getting a pension, Velarde allegedly gets an extremely huge the only stamped government.

• • •

Friends of Manila Regional Trial Court Judge Antonio Eugenio, who is running for re-election as president of the IBP, Judges Association of the Philippines, asked me if I can have I attended to in Saturday's column.

I said that a Manila RTC judge himself search reservation for the would have part of the peso contributed by corrupt police-and NBI agents.

He's it's not Eugenio. It's another judge whom I will write about by others. Have enough to elaborate.

METROBRIEFS

Suspected car thieves killed in shootout

TWO MEN allegedly caught in the act of stealing a parked car were killed in a shootout with policemen yesterday in Bagong City. Operatives of the Bagong City Police District Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit led by Insp. Roberto Reyes were on patrol when they saw the two men at around 3 a.m. near the corner of Scout Limbaga and Scout Fabian streets in Bagong. The suspects, who the police said, were trying to force open the door of a Toyota Vios, fired on the officers who accosted them. The police fired back, killing the two who reportedly sustained gunshot wounds. One man died and the other was taken to the hospital, where he died later. The dead were identified as Jonathan T. Andrade

Cop in trouble for firing at another cop

AN OFFICER of the Philippine National Police Crime Laboratory is in trouble for allegedly firing shots at another policeman after he rammed his vehicle into the center island of a street in Makati City yesterday. Chief Insp. Edmund Bating, 36, was arrested for indiscriminate firing, among other possible charges, when he allegedly fired at PO1st Dexter De Asis of the Makati traffic enforcement unit. Based on the investigation, Bating, who was driving a Toyota Avanza (plate number WTB 216), hit the patrol island on Kalayaan Avenue near the pedestrian overpass in Guadar at past 2 a.m. Investigators said the suspect then got out in an altercation with witnesses in the area, prompting them to call the police. When Pfc. De Asis arrived to take their statements, Bating allegedly fired at the officer, who managed to escape unscathed. He, however, sustained minor injuries when he fell down while running away. Bating was charged with attempted homicide

Japan's farm minister quits in new blow for Abe

TOKYO – JAPAN'S FARM MINISTER resigned Monday over a scandal, dealing a fresh blow to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe just a week after he reshuffled his cabinet in the hope of rescuing up the government's troops.

Toshikatsu Matsuoka's resignation as agriculture minister, Yoshiko Industrialized his resignation amid threats by an embattled opposition to censure his future in parliament.

Matsuoka took office exactly a week ago in a reshuffle by Abe, who had begun to see his government's approval ratings rebound after a stinging election rebuke following a raft of scandal troubles.

"I apologize that I could not meet the expectations of Prime Minister Abe, who had tried to renew public sentiment to pursue reforms," Endo told reporters.

He said he felt responsible for throwing Endo but repeated that he would stay in his job.

"I am acutely responsible for the appointment," she said. "Although it was a disappointing outcome, I want to carry out my responsibilities by making the utmost efforts to prevent any delays in forming policy."

But sticking to Abe's endeavour, Aso, the new vice foreign minister, Yukiko Tokunaga, also said she would quit over duplicating receipts reported by an office of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

"The LDP is going to collapse unless we don't set up unity to rehabilitate ourselves," ruling party lawmaker Masaaki Gondo said.

Abe's job, a veteran lawmaker with a distinctive bald head, admitted a group he heads to help farmers in his district padded its membership to get extra government help in 1999.

Separately, he said his campaign office accepted a small prohibited donation from a foreign cooperative.

He became the fifth minister to quit the cabinet, after three in the shuffle, since the took office a week ago.

Abe has had particularly bad luck with farm ministers, with one committing suicide under a cloud of corruption allegations and a second was embroiled in scandals that constituted to the election defeat.

The centre-left opposition, with backing from farmers who were long a steadfast LDP base, seized control of the upper house in July elections for the first time since the conservative ruling party was founded in 1955.

The opposition had threatened a no-confidence motion against Endo.

Yukio Hatoyama, a senior leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, warned that the upper house may now take up a censure motion against the premier himself.

"The exact nature of his responsibility to be picked a person he shouldn't have," Hatoyama said of Abe. "In the upper house, we want to consider the issue of a censure motion against the prime minister."

She had hoped to focus on other legislative priorities.

Even struggling to persuade the opposition to drop objections to extending a controversial Indian Ocean naval mission backing US-led forces in Afghanistan.

Abe had attacked his new cabinet with pollsters' estimate in hope of avoiding the scandals of his first government.

With a high-profile resignation source, Tetsuo-ki Shibata, professor emeritus at Tokyo Gakuei University, predicted that pressures would grow for Abe to call a general election.

"The string of incidents is really staggering," he said. AFP

ENDO announcing his resignation on Sept. 3 after he was linked to a farm corruption scandal. AP/AM

S. Korea tells ex-hostages to pay up

SEOUL – SOUTH KOREA MONDAY TOLD 19 former hostages to pay some of the cost of their rescue from Afghanistan's Taliban, amid increasing criticism of the ill-fated trip by the Christian aid workers.

President Roh Moo-Hyun "instructed his cabinet to exercise the government's indemnity right as strictly legal grounds," said his spokesperson Cheon Ho-Seon.

Cheon has said the government will recoup expenses including air fares and the cost of keeping back the bodies of two murdered hostages.

Ta Kyung-Ho, spokesperson for the group of 19 once captives, apologized repeatedly on their arrival in Seoul Sunday. "We owe the country and the people a great debt," he said.

The church group undertook the trip in defiance of foreign ministry warnings. Before departure it had been openly posting with an airport notice warning against travel to the Central Asian nation.

"By ignoring the government's warning and rashly carrying out a mission in a politically unstable Muslim country, the captives have laid a great burden on their country," Kyunghang Shin news paper said.

"By violating international principles and directly negotiating with a terrorist group, our country has invited censure from other countries. Seoul churches cannot escape the resulting criticisms that their aggressive missionary work put the lives of several innocent young people in dire jeopardy."

The group was finally after Seoul government negotiators reached a deal with the Taliban. They have been taken to Ghazni Provincial Hospital south of the capital for checks.

"Most patients are in stable condition and have no serious health problems," a hospital official said. AFP

Ahmadinejad has 'proof' US won't attack

TEHRAN – PRESIDENT MAHMOUD Ahmadinejad has sought to quell the fears that Tehran's nuclear programme will provoke US military strikes, saying the proof comes from his mathematical skills as an engineer and his faith in God, the press reported on Monday.

Ahmadinejad told academics in a speech that Tehran's nuclear programme has never been a threat to the world and that concerns inside the US were groundless.

"In terms of determination I told them: 'I am an engineer and I am continuing the issue. They do not dare wage war against us and I have this on a double proof," he said in the speech on Sunday.

"I tell them: 'I am an engineer and I am a master in calculation and tabulation.

"I draw up tables. For hours, I write out different hypotheses, I reject, I reason, I discuss with planning and I make a conclusion. They cannot make problems for Iran."

Ahmadinejad has long expressed pride in his academic position. He holds a PhD in transport engineering and planning from Tehran's Science and Technology University and is the author several of scientific papers.

The deeply religious president said his second source was: "I believe in what God says."

"God says those who will in the path of righteousness will be victorious. What reason do you have by believing God will not keep this promise?"

Washington has never ruled out taking military action against Tehran. AFP

MAHMOUD Ahmadinejad

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gatoo

UK troops begin Iraq pullout

BASRA, IRAQ—BRITISH TROOPS QUIT THE SOUTHERN Iraqi city of Basra on Monday, an Iraqi general said, leaving the oil hub without British forces for the first time since the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

The pullout of 550 soldiers from their base in Basra Palace, built for Saddam and bombarded daily by mortar and rocket fire, a another step toward handing over Britain's previously key stronghold to Iraqi control and an eventual withdrawal of British forces from Iraq.

Monday's withdrawal will lead to a cut in British soldiers in Iraq to about 5,000—all based at a vast British airbase outside the city, Major General Mohan al-Furaiji, commander of Iraqi security operations in Basra, told reporters the pullout was completed just before dawn.

Furaiji said they are assessing whether leaving the palace in the early hours of Monday Philippine time also took off and landed during the night. On Monday, Iraqi soldiers were on guard outside the main gate into the palace.

In a statement, the British Ministry of Defense said handing over the palace "has long been our intention."

It said British forces would remain overall security responsibility for Basra until the Iraqi army was in position to take control, expected towards the end of the year.

The pullout comes a week before US President George W. Bush's regular update to Congress on the country's security and political situation.

The withdrawal also comes amid recriminations between former US and British generals over the Iraq conflict.

Britain's Foreign and defense ministers published an editorial in a US newspaper last week defending Britain's role in the face of suggestions in US media that British forces had failed in Basra and were set to flee.

The British forces report restrictions, by military analysts and some newspapers US officials, that they have allowed Iran's gateway to the Gulf to fall into the hands of Shiite militias and their subcultural clans Basra Palace signals their defeat.

Basra has witnessed a cruel war between rival Shiite groups, including supporters of firey cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, the Supreme Iraqi Islamic Council, and smaller militia units, mainly for political supremacy and control of illegal oil traffic.

While residents say there is now a fragile calm in the city's center, there are fears the British withdrawal will be accompanied by an upsurge in factional violence.

Britain has handed over three other provinces in southern Iraq to Iraqi authorities amid a surge in attacks that have become the focus of US British criticism this year—the highest number of casualties suffered by the British since the first year of the war. Reuters

A BRITISH soldier during a patrol in Basra. After four-and-a-half months the onset of fighting, British forces during the night slipped out of their base in Basra. —

Bangladesh ex-PM Khaleda Zia, son arrested

DHAKA, BANGLADESH—Al- rested and refused bail for former leader Begum Khaleda Zia on Monday, witnesses and officials said.

Her younger son Arafat Rahman was also detained as the state-run Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha reported.

Security forces arrested Khaleda, the country's most recognizable politician, at her home. She was prepared for bail, which the state court rejected. She was then moved to a special jail in the capital, court officials said.

Hundreds of army-led security forces had surrounded Khaleda's home in the city's upmarket Gulshan area Sunday midnight and the son detained at about 7:30 a.m.

Khaleda was later produced in court under heavy police protection from there she was moved to Kashimpur maximum-security jail.

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WHAT'S INSIDE
■ Venus, Serena serve up q'final stints; Rafa wins /A24

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Knights grab 2nd over Bombers

By Mari Anthony Reyes

LETRAN SECURED TEE NO. 2 slot and the twice-to-beat bonus that comes with it after avenging past Jose Rizal, 74-71, yesterday at the close of the NCAA basketball elimination at the Arena.

The Knights nearly blew a 17-point lead, 57-40, with two minutes left before EJ Jarid and Raymar Gotiban turned back the rallying Heavy Bombers to finish with a 3-3 record.

"It was scary with," said Letran coach Louie Alas, who will meet the same Heavy Bombers in the Final Four starting Wednesday. "You have to give it to Jose Rizal for not giving up."

Jose Rizal wound up tied at 7-3.

Defending champion San Beda, which topped the eliminations earlier with an 11-1 card, faces Emilio Aguinaldo College in the other semifinal pairing at the Araneta Coliseum.

Jarid sank the three-point shot gave the Cagers their biggest lead with 7:30 left, and when the Bombers closed back to 69-68 with two minutes to go behind Mark Cagoco and John Wilson, the 6-foot playmaker again knocked in a triple to keep Letran afloat.

Gotiban then added two free throws for a 68-63 buffer to the last 1:08 before making key steal off Cagoco and Pillazo down the stretch to seal the win.

"We just don't want to lose back-to-back, especially going to the Final Four," said Alas, who lost to San Beda last Friday. "Now we only need to win one game to make the finals."

Gotiban scored eight of his 20 points in the fourth, while Jarid banged in 11 of his 19 in the same period. Their combined efforts put to waste the 20-point explosion by the Bombers in the final canto.

The Bombers made only 16 of 43 attempts from the floor and 29 of 46 tries from the free throw line.

Perpetual Help sat Arellano 77-69 in the first game, defending champion San Sebastian whipped Perpetual Help, 89-75, to snare the top position in the Final Four with a 6-0 card.

Letran finished No. 2, while San Beda and Jose Rizal wound up third and fourth, respectively.

LETRAN'S Dennis Dia dives to gain possession off Jose Rizal U's John Agcaoili yesterday's game.

Pacman, still a bit under weather, resumes sparring

By Edwin L. Lagumbay, Correspondent

MANNY DAGUIO DEMANDED HIS RINGside ration at the Rex "Wahoo" Salud gym yesterday showing little signs of the flu that knocked him down last weekend and caused a minor delay in his training.

The Filipino boxing hero sparred six rounds, three each against Mexican Raymundo Beltran and light welterweight Arnel Tinampay.

"I'm feeling OK [now]," he said, "I still have colds but this is very manageable."

Team Pacquiao fanfave said trainer Freddie Roach did not want to push Pacquiao, but the latter insisted on sparring for six rounds, bringing his total so far to close to 20 rounds since holding camp.

Roach is working at getting between 120 to 150 rounds of sparring for Pacquiao in preparation for his Oct. 6 battle with Mayo-Armenia Barrera at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas.

Brotherly advice: The title, not the win streak, counts

By Jasmine W. Paye

THEY WERE NOT exactly words of encouragement.

But the advice to the Utes' coach of the East coach Dindo Pumaren came from a brother who knows how it's like to call the shots if not seemingly impossible ideas.

"If I can't love you into the season, it's how you end it," said elder brother and Ateneo coach Frankie Pumaren.

As the elimination round nears the homestretch, Dindo's Fighting Maroons are the only undefeated squad in the UAAP men's basketball competition.

The Warriors only need to fumble two more games—the visiting University of the Philippines Maroons and the La Salle Green Archers—to go straight to the Finals, the heretofore quest to a championship that's already 11 games in the elimination round.

"What he's only admitted is not, at the back of their minds, they're thinking of a sweep," said Frankie. "The more they think about that sweep, I think the more they're going to struggle."

And that's Pumaren the brother reminder to fetch his claim.

In 2003, Fumo entered the season as a commanding 13-0 record but slowed during break-breaking losses to a red Mapua Red Cagles in the final elimination game and in the best-of-three championship series.

And just last season, Ateneo dressed and forced an unbeatable the game would have out. The tie-round Eagles forked it over and left the vanity of Isaac Tampus one win from more his last to make them in the 8-

LAST BIG HURDLE. The Warriors hope to tame the Archers, just as they did in the first round, to reach the magic number and reach the finish early. Bernardo

tals.

"It's still a long way," said Ateneo. "They (Warriors) have two games to go and anything can happen. They still have to contend with La."

The Warriors, though, are well aware of the tougher challenges ahead.

Unlike in their first-round route, when they won by an average margin of 16.3 points, the Warriors wiggled their way out in the closing minutes of three of their last five games.

"The opposition the second round to be more difficult, we know that all teams are preparing for us," said Dindo. "But I still like what's happening with our team. At the last round, the Archers showed they could rout opponents. But this time, they've been choosing they also have the composure to win close games."

Bulls sign up Duncil, ready to let Cablay go

By Marang B. Castillo

RED BULL GAINED another dependable guard in its rotation by signing former Swift Texas gunner Jojo Duncil to a two-year pact even as the team continues to negotiate a trade involving Rustom Cablay with Purefoods.

DUNCIL: Two years

Team manager Tony Chua said that the talks are still on, but Red Bull has turned down initial offers from Purefoods, which only wanted to part with two draftees instead of three.

The problem for Cablay, a 5-foot-11 Filipino-American, found his way into the Rambo roster via the Larry Brackett trade earlier.

"We know that there is practically no future left for the rookie pool when it comes to second rounders," Chua said the business. "This deal will push through if we get first-round choices—for it in 2008 and 2009—so as long as it is in the first round."

The Rambo kicked off every Team in the 2008 Pinakay of the Year to San Miguel in exchange for Cabby and rookie player Ferdie Salvador.

Duncil, a product of guards in the lineup, counting Dunell Cruz, Andy Seguerra and Topex Robinson, has made Cablay disposable. Details of Duncil's package were not revealed by Chua.

Koreans nip Realtors for Brunei Cup

BOURIE... THE LA SALLIES OF BOston pulled out a crippled 79-72 win over the Ilac Lucio Realtors Sunday to win the seventh Brunei Cup basketball tournament at the Pantawid Pilipino Nasional Sports Complex here.

The Realtors were down by only four at 72-74 and on the attack when Anthony Johnson was slapped with two offensive foul fines down to 32 seconds to the dismay of the big Filipino crowd.

The Koreans scored on the next play to clinch the championship while escaping their 79-66 loss to the Filipinos in the eliminations.

"It was a dubious call that neutered the victory for the Koreans," said the Lucio team manager Buddy Encarnacion.

The Realtors settled for second-place in the annual Brunei international tourney after the past two years by the PBA winning team senior coach Chot Reyes.

Chot Reyes, who are guiding for the coming PBA season, finally felt the absence of team mate Kelly Williams, who's on vacation in the United States after seeing action with the RP team in the season Filipino debut in Japan.

Johnson posed Mr. Lucio with 24 points, Jeffrey Cruzada added 13, Pedro Mendoza 12 and Wilfredo Ingcao 10.

The Realtors found the Koreans a lot tougher in their rematch, taking the lead for the first time only at 67-64 midway through the fourth quarter.

Calling cagers with Pinoy roots

By Jane Hacierda

THE VARALIANG BASKETBALL DE PILIPINAS hopes to intensify recruits search for homegrown talents with Filipino roots in the United States and Canada.

Eric Altamirano, head of the SBP's National Basketball Training Center, said training centers in North America will be set up to tap the players who no national team materials.

Altamirano said he is in touch with Australia-based SBP Central chief Scottson Reynolds.

SBPTC looks for promising young players aged 14-19 across the country.

Training facilities will be established for the ambitious five-year program designed to identify, hone and develop future members of the PBP and its national pool, Altamirano said.

"Once we have set up these regional training centers, we will explore the field in the United States and Canada," said Altamirano.

Altamirano has been tapped by BASEBP executive director Patrick Gregorio to head the SBPTC along with Jean-Jose PBA/MVP Ramon Fernandez and Vehicle Pride assistant coach Alex Compton.

SPORTSWATCH

Star-studded NCA derby features finest battle stags

THE STAR-STUDDED FINEST BATTLE STAGS take center stage today at the Rizal Memorial Gymkhana Association inside the first leg of its 9-day carnival at Pres. Quirino Ave.

Some 80 players from...

Tentatively, headed by Gov. Ito Nicanor, Vice Gov. Rowen Jones, Mayor Elmo Bagarao, and Mayors Jun-Jun Suarez and Bobbit, has drawn some of the biggest names in local cockfighting. The participants include Bobcat Ramos, Rhyn Ramos, Dante Villanueva, Mayor Bobbit, Atty. Rudy Salandanan, Rene Cordero, Jong-Ringor, Joel Fernandez, the Hidalgo-Rosas Brothers, Jerry Rosero, Patrick Sebastian, Danny Vidanes Diaz, Egay de Guzman, Joel Tan, Ferdie Bobadilla, Mengo Lito, Wilfredo Tan, Rodney Ilo, el Dancel, Johnny Alcantara and Rey Cabral of Bulacan, Rudy Reyes and his son Rey Mayers.

Part of the proceeds of the derby, supported by Sagasasa Complaint 2000, will go to the NCBA scholarship fund.

Carzano, Salgados top Shell Nat'l Active chess in Cebu

JOHNNY CARZANO HELD MASTER CHESSman Jr. to a draw in the final round to finish with 8.5 points and tie three others in the tiebreak for the junior crown in the Central Visayas leg of the Shell National Youth Active Chess at SM City Cebu last weekend.

The 19-year-old Carzano downed Venancio Loyola, Andrea Divinia and Michael Vergara before opening to a draw with Dhavid to top the 20-round single-category. Batasan District of Caraga star Jio Jio and Bicol District of Daraga by the grand finish later this year.

Lorenzo Noel Salgados beat Yusef Hadji to the board to occupy the fifth-to-eighth spot.

BRAWO, LOI JERE!

Philippine Airlines president Jaime J. Bautista hands the championship cup to Loi Jeho-ric Cebu governor Edgar Chiongbian (center, in shirt) at the close of the 38th PAL Interport Tournament, held in Cebu over the weekend. Flanking them are PAL executives, including executive vice president Henry Lu Ly and Interport chair Domingo T. Dionisio, awards night emcee Bernadette Sembrano, and members of the winning side. The host Jetes won the over-all title events to garner 145 points and win the coveted swing tournament carrying honors, meet titles and prize attack here to stay in PAL destination. Dubbed small champion Bombers in Clarice finished second with 75 point while the Negros Executives wound up third with 73 points. This year's games, dubbed "Games to Save," drew 12 clubs and over 800 participants from across the country and overseas, making it the largest PAL Interport ever.

Naascu hoops: New 'cyber war' in offing

By Mars Anthony Reyes

AS THE OCTOBER NINE AGAIN starts to take shape, EFE and the defending champion ABA would begin opened within their respective rivalry biggest and hotspot.

EFI hardly broke ground in the opening of two Interbasa Gardia, World, to make its third straight championship appearance since Saturday in the Rizal and Athletics Association Gabriel of Schools, College and Universities basketball tournament at the Rainbow gym in Quezon.

"We were able to display our edge in depth and in our inside-outplays," said EFI coach Ato Francisco, whose team entered the game sweeping preseason local honors.

Jordan Abelo joined University of Manila, 86-62, to leave a dread-ing game for the second-fiddle slot.

The Titans rolled the seven-in-a-row

Turn to page A11

FEU's Sports Hall of Fame

LAST WEDNESDAY, FAR EASTERN University held the induction ceremonies for the school's 36 outstanding athletes who were the first honorees to the Sports Hall of Fame at the FEU auditorium.

The ceremonies also marked the first launching of "Sizzle @ FEU," which—he ranked the school's past and present champions.

Published by the FEU Publications, the book was edited by Sylvia Nuevo-Morelli, with articles written by Gene B. Alipoli. FEU athletic director Mark Molina and associates.

Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim was the guest of honor during the rites after which he was cordially welcomed by top university officials headed by Dr. Lourdes R. Montinola, chair of the board of trustees; president Lydia B. Echauz; and Treasurer from managers Ines and Steve Hontiveros.

Among those inducted in the initial batch of the honorees were brothers-weightlifters Anthony Villanueva, who gave the Philippines its first Olympic silver medal in the 1964 Tokyo Games;

CLEAN LIVING

Manuelo N. Dolijo

tennis legend Filemon "Tenny" Amores, the first PBA Athlete of the Year in 1982; boxing coach Celestino "Sling" Enriquez; track and field Olympians Lydia de Vega-Mercado, Elma Muros-Posadas, 86 swimmers and Lydia Lopez; swimmer Hayden Cabezas-Espino, boxers Leobegilo Espinosa and the fabulous Pandelas brothers—triple-threats, theatre, baseball—and Republic—and basketball stars Manuel Amores, member of the Philippine team in the 1948 London Olympics, former PBA MVP Johnny Abarrientos, multi-awarded expert Arturo Valenzona, Danny Lorenzo and Glenn Capacio.

In FEU, where I spent my college days, there are as many sports. Every sport is encouraged.

In the coach of Dr. Montinola, daughter of the FEU founder, Dr. Nicanor Nieves, "Sports has always played a big role in Far Eastern University," adding, "My father and many of his colleagues, like Don Rafael Nieves, were sportsmen who learned, lobbied, played golf, enjoyed the recreation, appreciated culture, and enjoyed traveling and socializing extensively all over the islands."

Why was her father so passionate about sports? The soft-spoken FEU chair explained, "From what I used to hear him say to my brothers, Nicanor (Nieves) and Alfredo (Ang), sports offers wide opportunities because it taught one how to be a gentleman—how to be sportsmanlike."

The Nieves brothers were trained in many sports, especially boxing and judo. They also took up swimming, baseball, hunting and fishing.

"In hunting, "Dr. Montinola said, "he taught my brothers and my cousins, like the Nieves brothers, the sportsmanlike ways of shooting birds and other game in the forests and not just sports—Chito Jaime, Leonardo Abaya and Arnold Galang—to put away the Hunks and bullets (M-1 lever-to-look ridge in three separate Filipino shotguns).

Turn to page A11

She added that Dionisio still in boxing served him well when he joined the United Nations Air Force during Pilot Lt. Nie S. "As a flyweight champion in the training camp in Texas," she said, "During was able to defend himself against bullies in the concentration camp in Bonifacio, Germany, when he was incarcerated after his plane, in which he was a valid passenger, crashed during one of its bombing missions."

Having eventually become president of FEU, while Ding, who finished a course in sports management in the US, became the university's vice president for administrative affairs and athletic director. Other than sports, their interest in sports was continued by Nieves's son, Nicanor "Butch" Nieves II, who served as athletic director, while Alfredo's son, Dennis, also took an active role in sports.

Anton Boyet Montinola was likewise inducted by Manila Lim into the GSAP board and, since then, has guided and supervised the courses of FEU athletes, especially the basketball team.

Golf qualifier resumes; Bayron tries to bridge gap

By Hussey B. Cordis

THE HAMILTON NATIONAL GOLF TEAM qualifier started as a tournament, and a few thought the Pacific Coast Golf Club would.

Entering the homestretch, Bayron's task now is just to stay alive.

On the fairway after the first half of the elimination ended last Friday, Bayron tries to start making up ground when the 36 survivors see action in the final 72 holes beginning today.

Ten strokes off the pace after Friday's 36-hole cut of the seventh player, Bayron—who was practically every location not to be entered since his last appearance in the Philippine Amateur Golf Championship in Subic—needs to put together decent rounds at The Palisades Course layout in Silang, Cavite, to secure one of six Philippine team slots.

Mark Reynolds, the sponsorship of the Quezon Golf Club, produced a 2-under 142 total to jump into the final four days, his place in the 80 vaunted that will play in the Pines and Palisades Open and the Southeast Asian Games potentially sealed.

Mark's cousin Anthony Fernando, the leader after the first two rounds at the inaugural Guiguinto Bayron, holds second, six shots adrift after failing to break par in the final two days and shooting a four-under 77 in round three.

Anthony is tied with Ferdinand Asuncion, the former long-timer at Eagle Ridge. Jonel Abalos, the first National Caddies' Open champion, is fourth at 295.

Three former Asian Games bronze medal winners Michael Ebbet at 294, with Bayron, at 296 and Gene Rondez in seventh-spot at 297.

The sixth player may lose his slot if the winner of the coming SP Amateur, is not among the best six qualifiers.

Jim Bankart in Rolls, the oldest lawyer in the far East, will host this year's staging of the SP Am scheduled next week.

LASCUÑA: Tie for 3rd, then a tie for 3rd

Surging Lascuña passes Murakami

WITH TWO TOP FIVE FINISHES in as many weeks, Antonio Lascuña edged past Johor Open champion Antonio Murakami to take 40th place in the Asian Tour's Order of Merit.

Lascuña, who carded the top-60 list with his strong finish behind Murakami when the Asian Tour resumed in Malaysia, is now No. 3 among five Filipinos in the upper half of the Order of Merit.

Frankie Miñoza, winner of the Philippine Open last February, is No. 28 with $109,622 followed by Gerald Escalera at 34th with $75,062.

Angelo Que, who earned the halfway cut in Sentosa like Rosales, is 61st with $54,424.

The top 60 players in the Order of Merit qualify for the season-ending $750,000 Volvo Masters of Asia set in Bangkok in December while securing automatic entry in the 2008 Asian Tour.

Jose Dagoonan, last year's Rookie of the Year, is in danger of losing his exemption as he stood 75th with $20,546 in 11 events. He finished tied for 30th in Busan.

Ernesto A. Gonzales

FINNAIR MASTERS

Ardina ties for 29th spot

SUTTER SKIBBA CLOSED OUT NETHA two-over par 73 and finished in joint 29th in the rain-shortened Finnair Masters won by Bernhard Haupert of Germany in Helsinki, Finland, Sunday.

Skibba, 33, recovered from a bogey-bogey start with a slew of pars, landed Sir. 10-foot-car for birdie dropping no-other strokes on Nos. 13 for a share of 26-27.

She secured top with a 54-hole total of 219, six-over par, to finish in the company of pros Beatriz Recari (77) of Spain, South African Lauren Hedl (72) and Magdalena Ripoa of Italy (77), who pulled up (E), 300 each.

Ireland's Stable cam, a big improvement from his joint 59th place in last week's Old Masters in Sweden, the Ladies European Tour rookie described her is "out on the ending" to complete of many of her professional counterparts by finishing in the top 10.

Haupert closed out with a 72 and won by three strokes with a 207 total. Johanna Pietsiläinen of Sweden finished second with a 213 after a 70 while Lotta Neumann, also of Sweden (70), was third with 211.

Avena prevails in Rotary tilt

LOAG CITY—ARE AVENA OF THE ROTARY Club of Lipa and Makarayat Golf Club toured the 1,886-yard, Barbaro course with gross rounds of 74 and 75 to bag top individual honors on the recent Rotary Fellowship Foundation of the Philippines tournament here.

A former Philippine Navy man from BC Ilaw Manila's Nissi Alvarado—20 handicap, who put together 79-76 rounds.

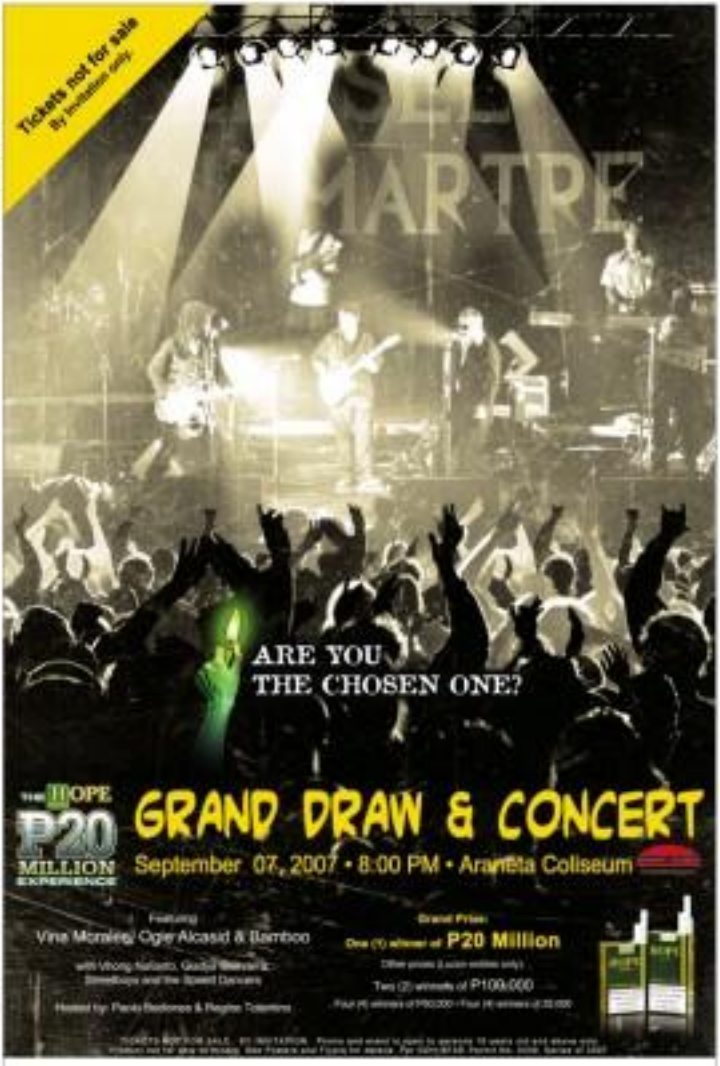
Jun Mallorca scored 152 points to capture the overall title of the Southern leg country held at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club boys.

Ramil Gonzales, Jess Amigos, Tony Gillespaye and Steve Andales propelled Ann-Bitchers to victory in the team event.

Mark Rivera raked the guest division via countback after he tied with Cleaye Dalay at 86.

RC Bacolodod Boy Pedragosa, Robert Pineda and Eduard Gino tied with RC Lipa's Bill Yoon, Ed Lipat, Val Pleto and Avena in the Rotarian's division with 267 points each.

RC of New Manila Jun's Fred Salapi, Noni Alvarado, Francis Menendez and Tony Rosada tallied 337 to bar the Governor's division, over Sto. Tomás Balanad's Dives Manuere, Bernie Bolano and Elton Estrada (346).



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Steinhauer coasts to victory

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS—DANIELLE STEINHAUER SHOT A NINE-UNDER 62 to complete a nine-in-a-row victory in the LPGA Ladies Farm Classic on Sunday. Steinhauer's record, with back-to-back birdies on 16 and 17, gave her a 271 for-72 and a four-victory race between Lorena Ochoa, who carded a 66. AFP

Venus, Serena serve up q'final stints; Rafa wins

RAFAEL NADAL retains a volley in Jo-Wilfried Tsonga on the US Open tennis tournament in New York, Sunday. Reuters

NEW YORK—VENUS AND SERENA Williams served their way into the US Open quarterfinals with temperature-wrought wins on Sunday, setting up a possible clash between the American sisters in the Final Four.

Venus never lost her serve during a 6-4, 6-2 drubbing of Ana Ivanovic, while Serena stopped Women's Nation Russia's 6-2, 6-4, by blasting 18 aces and handing 75 percent of her first serves.

A Venus-Serena matchup would be third clash at Flushing Meadows and the first since meeting in the 2005 fourth round.

"That would be overcome because it would mean that there is a Williams in the final, and it would mean that Americans have a chance to win," said Venus, who won the 2000 championship.

Standing in the way of Serena's possible clash with Venus is top seed and world number one Justine Henin, who demolished 10th seed Dinara Safina, 6-0, 6-2, in just 59 minutes.

On the men's side, second seed Rafael Nadal said he continued to suffer from nagging injuries to both knees but it never showed during a 7-6, 6-2, 6-2 victory over Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.

Nadal had only 14 unforced errors and never lost his serve against the 74th-ranked Tsonga.

"It was important for me to win in straight sets," said the second-seeded Spaniard. "I'm my knees it's better because I can be a little bit more relaxed on the next match."

In the fourth round, Nadal will face compatriot David Ferrer, who needed just under four hours to defeat Argentine David Nalbandian, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4, 7-5, 7-5.

Third seeded Novak Djokovic of Serbia recovered from his four-hour, 44-minute victory over Radek Stepanek on Friday to roll over Australian Ante Matkic 3rd Peter, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4.

Other third-round winners included Stanislas Wawrinka, Juan Ignacio Chela, Carlos Moya and Juan Monaco.

Venus Williams will face 2006 semifinalist Jelena Jankovic, a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 winner over 19th seed Ajiella Rasmussen of Australia in the quarterfinals. Reuters

LEBRON JAMES. Reuters

LeBron and Co. too flashy for Argentina

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA—LEBRON James put on another shooting clinic in a 118-81 rout of Argentina as the United States looked up to win its seventh gold medal to go with an Olympic berth at the Fiba Americas Championship on Sunday.

James, who had a perfect night against Uruguay earlier in the tournament by turning all 11 of his field goals, led the heavily favored Americans with a four-three pointers in the third quarter and capped his night with a game-high 31 points.

"LeBron's performance was one of the best ever in an international game that a US player has ever had," American coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Carmelo Anthony and Dwight Howard also looked unstoppable, springboarding the US to a 28-point lead at the half in front of a crowd of about 9,000 at the Thomas and Mack Center arena. Anthony finished with 16 points and eight rebounds and Howard had 20 points and five rebounds.

"The Team USA is one of the best I have ever seen," Argentina head coach Sergio Hernandez said. "Nobody will ever forget the first Dream Team with Michael Jordan and Magic Johnson, but I like this USA team very much with Kobe Bryant and LeBron James. They really know how to play together."

The USA said debunking Olympic champion suggestions were playing for USA Basketball bragging rights in both countries had already clinched berths in the basketball tournament for next summer's Beijing Olympics.

Manu Ginobili scored 19 points and Carlos Arroyo had 16 and 10 assists as Puerto Rico beat Brazil, 111-107, for the bronze medal earlier in the day.

USA and Argentina join Canada (host country), Spain (world champion), Iran (Asia), Australia (Oceania), Angola (Africa) in the 2008 Olympic Games.

Brazil, Puerto Rico, and Canada will get another chance to qualify at a 12-team 2008 Fiba Olympic qualifying tournament held July 2, which three more countries will punch their tickets to China.

The Americans were never seriously challenged in the non-qualifying tournament and, heading into the final their 39.2 average margin of victory is one of the highest in international history.

"The thing I enjoyed most about this team is that everybody got their opportunity," James said. "Guys like Kobe who run scoring titles every year handed it over to Carmelo." AFP

Former leg champ, rookie shine in Milo Iloilo qualifier

WINNERS Eric Pasigon and Marlaon Marcelo show their trophies at the podium. They are flanked (r-l) by Milo MVP for sports Pat Quirong, Rep. Raul Gonzalez jr., Manila regional sales manager Dennis Pe-ano, Iloilo City Sports Council chair Councilor Jon-Jon Espinosa, Councilor Junjun Hernandez and Vice Mayor Joel Mabilog

ILOILO CITY—FORMER LEG WILson Eric Pasigon and rookie Marlaon Marcelo topped the 21-kilometer qualifying race of the 2008 National Milo Marathon in an outward-and-back course here at the Freedom Park Sports.

Pasigon, the 2005 Iloilo leg champion, pulled away from the lead pack after the first seven kilometers and never looked back, finishing in one hour, 12 minutes and four seconds.

Pasigon second-ran Pasigon's mate during Iloilo's Aurelio Robleza, who came in two minutes and five seconds behind. Local favorite Willfredo Golbahan Jr., who was here last year, settled for third place in 1:18:11.

The 18-year-old Marcelo of Victorias, Negros Occidental, won the women's race in 1:45:50, seven seconds ahead of last year's winner Genevieve dela Pena.

Allyn Grace Sales was third in 1:47:28.

The top three winners in both divisions qualified to the grand finals in Bacolod on September.

Herman Sales of Sta. Barbara, Iloilo rode the limelight. Sales won at the 10th and 1987 Milo Marathon national champion, now 47, came out of retirement to finish the 21K race in tandem close to 1:23:09.

Sales, who last competed 18 years ago, used to own the Iloilo Marathon mark of 2:23:56. The current record held by two-time Olympian Eduardo Buenavista is 2:18:53 he set during the National Capital Region leg of the ongoing season last July 22.

The winners of the 5K fun of the race held in conjunction with category, Sugarjane Dick Reed-Ebuenia, athlete and the Department of Tourism, were Darius Burgoos in the men's category and Jean Palmares in the women's division. Topping the 5K race for kids were Alec Stahl and Cristelle Villalmanca in the 6-9 age group and Mary Antoni Milchen and Bianca Grace Estacio in the 10-12 age group.

Councilor Jon El Espinosa lived the starting gun that flagged off 6,831 runners. Rep. Raul Gonzalez Jr. joined the 5K fun run along with Iloilo City Councilors Junjun Hernandez and Vice Mayor Joel Mabilog.

The country's biggest and longest-running marathon returns to Luzon on Sunday, Sept. 9, in Naga City.

Wetterich up by 1; late slip derails Tiger

WOODS: Uncharacteristic sloppy finish

NORTON, MASS. (Reuters)—Longhitting Brett Wetterich birdied 16 of his last eight at the par-three seventh and a late slip by Tiger Woods, who finished 4 over-par final after the third round of the Deutsche Bank Championship on Sunday.

A stroke off the pace overnight at the TPC Boston, Wetterich took advantage of ideal scoring conditions on a glorious late summer's day by firing a four-under par 66.

The 34-year-old from Ohio, bidding for a second PGA Tour victory, also registered four birdies and a lone bogey at the 16th for a 13-under total of 200.

The US Ryder Cup player, who won last year's Byron Nelson Championship, parked his tee shot well right of the par-four 18th and had to take a penalty drop but then drained a superb five-iron shot for a closing bogey.

American Arron Oberholser holed a 20-foot putt to save par on the 18th green for a startling 66 and outright second place at 12 under, one ahead of world number three Phil Mickelson (68).

Defending champion Woods returned a 67 to share fourth spot at 10 under with Australian Aaron Baddeley, who bogeyed two of the last three holes for a 70.

Woods, back in action after a two-week break, briefly held a share of the lead before dropping back with an uncharacteristically sloppy finish.

The world number one moved joint top after ending off three consecutive birdies from the par-three eighth. Reuters

Gay's sprint treble spikes Americans' track dominance

GAY: Second gold for me

OSAKA, JAPAN—JEREMY GAY'S explosive sprint treble highlighted his country's continued track dominance at the world athletics championships.

As the Americans celebrated, the iconic Japanese crowd shed their hosts as the organizers began into how they were just a solitary bronze on the final day in Osaka on Sunday.

After emulating world record holder Asafa Powell in the 100 metres, Gay added gold in the 200 and 4x100 relay to become the second man to achieve the sprint treble at a world championships.

Fellow American Maurice Greene first did the trick in the 1999 edition.

Allyson Felix completed a hat-trick of her own after winning her 200m crown and added victories in the 4x100 and 4x400 to equal Jeremy Wariner's double gold medal in 1903.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Wariner edged down to twenty-hundredth second record with a superior victory in the men's 400m final.

The United States won 14 gold medals to equal its tally from the 2005 world championships in Helsinki and host its confidence for the Beijing Olympics. Reuters

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BUSINESS

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Coke reorganizes RP operations

Will add 1,000 new jobs, hire 2,000 sales agents

IN THIS ISSUE

PPA ordered to proceed with North Harbor bidding /B2

Bernanke should stick to his guns /B4

21 groups eye RP power grid /B6

By Elizabeth Sardido-Lioson

ATLANTA-BASED THE COCA-COLA CO. IS MAKING A big push in the local beverage market, reorganizing Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPHI) and two of its subsidiaries in a bid to add more fizz to its dominant stature in the Philippines.

CCBPHI and subsidiaries Coca-Cola Bottling Corp. (CBC) and Philippine Beverage Partners Inc. (PhilBev) yesterday announced the completion of a reorganization plan—highlighted by the addition of 1,000 new jobs in the local Coke operations and the hiring of 2,000 new sales associates—to boost efficiency and gain market share.

"As a business organization, we want to further drive fresh new market and financial growth by redesigning our organization to suit market development and customer service," said Jose Bayhon, CCBPHI director for public affairs and communications.

After a thorough review of its internal operations and market growth opportunities, he said management decided to transfer the production requirements from CBC to...

CONCEPCION /A2

Customs exceeds ₱20.8-B target for August

By Michelle F. Remo

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS SAID IT met its collection target for August, giving credit to its measures of tightening the audit of goods shipped into the country.

The BOC was tasked to collect P20.8 billion in August and was hard-pressed to perform well in the second half following an anemic revenue collection in the first six months of the year.

The BOC is the second biggest revenue collecting agency of the government. Its collection target of P228.2 billion for the entire year is consistent with the aim of limiting the budget deficit to 195 billion this year from last year's P64.8 billion.

It earlier reported that its collection for January to July stood at P111.68 billion.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales earlier said his office was tightening on its audit processes and automating its systems to help curb corruption and smuggling, central why the government is said to be losing billions of potential revenues a year.

He said the BOC recently secured 15 X-ray machines that were installed in several customs ports all over the country. The machines hasten the process of inspecting imports and enhanced the security against smuggling. The BOC is trying to acquire 15 more X-ray machines to totally eliminate the manual way of inspecting goods.

"There is not better way to address corruption but by automating," Morales said.

The Customs chief said the BOC has also updated its database on the valuation of goods. Previously outdated valuation data used by some ports were resulting in underpayment of import duties.

On the other hand, the Bureau of Internal Revenue said its preliminary collection figure for August was "encouraging," although it declined to give any detail yet.

CUSTOMS /A2

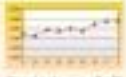
CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

46.37 = $1

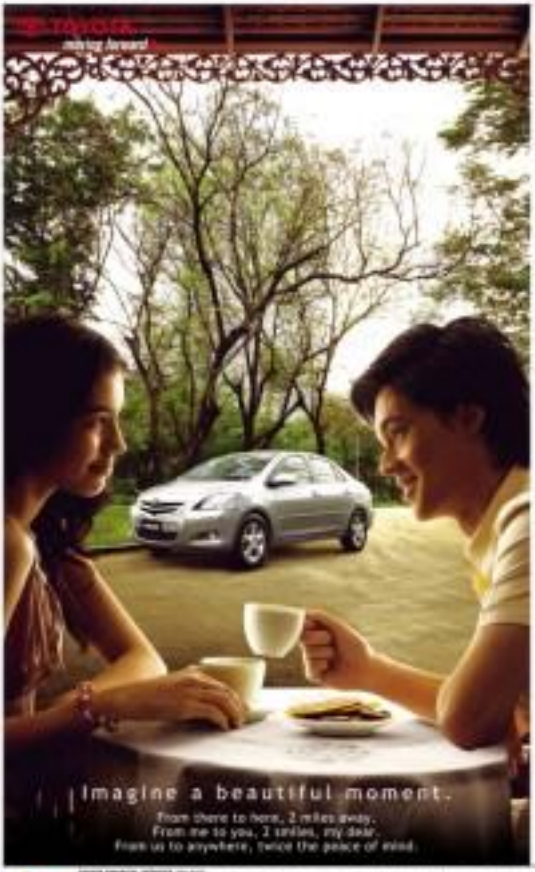
As of 5 p.m., June 3, 2007

STOCK MARKET



Stocks up 0.1%

0.1 percent higher yesterday on selective buying in blue chips, dealers said. This offset the sell-off in power stocks.



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PPA ordered to proceed with North Harbor bidding

By Rico T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY (PPA) has to proceed with the bidding out of a shipping facility at the Manila North Harbor, the Manila Regional Trial Court's (RTC) ordered.

In an Aug. 29 ruling, the Manila RTC Branch 21 ordered PPA to "immediately release the bidding documents to petitioners Challenge Cruises Ltd. Inc. and Inc., and 3rd parties Silvercraft Shipping Corp. and upon payment of the cost thereof and upon posting by bond in the amount of P100,000."

Last month, the petitioners filed "a writ of mandamus with a prayer for preliminary mandatory injunction" that would make the PPA proceed with the bidding. There cited RA 9184, which says the PPA can negotiate with one eligible bidder.

Several companies have expressed interest in the bidding for the container-Harbour Center, from Terminals Inc., Magsaysay Maritime Corp., Pier 8 Arrastre and Stevedoring Services, and Philippine Cartons Brokerage—but only Harbour Center was declared qualified to bid.

Asian Terminals and Prudential were disqualified for lack of eligibility. Magsaysay Maritime backed out, and Pier 8 was a no-show. The situation prompted the PPA to declare the bidding a failure.

The PPA, instead of proceeding with the auction or entering into a negotiated sale with the remaining qualified bidder, decided to hold a new round of bidding, but the schedule has yet to be set until now.

"We cannot understand why PPA changed the rules midway and did not release the bid documents," Harbour Center CEO Mylinel Benitez said in the letter.

PPA general manager Oscar Serilla said in an interview that the regulations wanted to get the best possible offer for the contract as it performed to have at least two bidders. However, the PPA also prepared guidelines for a negotiated bid in case the bidding fails.

The first bid-out has not ended, however. The court called for further hearing on the petitioner's writ of mandamus to make the PPA complete the first round of bidding up to the awarding of the contract.

Several officials of the port regulator were either unavailable or declined to comment on the said court ruling.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATIONS FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMITS (AEP'S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office applications for Alien Employment Permits:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Tourism boom hindered by poor infra

THE GROWTH of Philippine tourism industry has been hampered by the lack of information about the country as a tourist destination, the limited number of tourist destinations, negative perceptions about the country and the relatively higher cost of taking a vacation in the Philippines than in other countries.

More hotels, flights needed to sustain growth

By Dustin L. Lucas

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MULTIBILLION dollar tourism industry continues to be hampered by severe limitations of local infrastructure in the hospitality and transportation sectors, a longtime tourism advocate said yesterday.

Because of this, the country is missing out on the tourism boom in the Asian region, geared mainly by the growing affluence of Chinese citizens, according to Bernardito T. Lim, chairman of tourism and hospitality consultancy firm Jean Paul's Prospects Inc.

She said the inadequacy of the local tourism industry was felt most severely in the hotel business where occupancy rates have stood close to fourteen highs in recent months, leading to periodic shortages of hotels, motels, and sightseeing amenities.

Speaking at a forum sponsored by the Economic Policy Reform and Advocacy think tank, Lim pointed out that Manila only has 9,389 deluxe and first-class rooms at hotels accredited by the Department of Tourism. A further 1,747 rooms are available in Cebu City, for a total of 11,096 rooms.

In contrast, Bangkok has 50,857 deluxe and first-class rooms available to travelers. The Thai beach resort town of Phuket has another 19,878 rooms. The Indonesian resort of Bali, on the other hand, has 17,986 deluxe and first-class rooms.

The large supply of rooms ensures that the accommodation demands of tourists are met, while the competition among hotels helps ensure that prices can kept competitive, she explained.

Since last year, the country has been swept up in the regional tourism boom, seeing record-high arrivals from Korea, China, Japan and Taiwan.

In 2006, Lim said that the United States overtook Japan for the first time as the country's biggest source of foreign arrivals by recording 1.2 million citizens flock to the Philippines to do business, recreation or to go on vacation.

On top of limited accommodation, Lim said the growth of the industry remained capped by the lack of flights into the country, lack of information about about the country as a tourism destination, the limited number of tourism destinations, negative perceptions about the country and the relatively higher cost of taking a vacation in the Philippines than in other countries.

BIR schedules roadshow on tax amnesty program

By Michelle V. Ruiz

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE will hold a road show outside Metro Manila to inform the public on the details of the tax amnesty law following its implementation on Sept. 6.

Deputy BIR Commissioner Helena Aspe said revenue authorities finished seminars with Metro Manila-based business groups and professional organizations and were set to go to other major cities all over the country to discuss the recently enacted law.

The government hopes to entice many delinquent taxpayers into applying for a tax amnesty to generate additional revenues from the imposition of amnesty fees from taxdebtors who were considered bad in credit.

The tax amnesty law grants non-delinquents the privilege of being free from prosecution if they apply for tax amnesty and pay the amnesty tax amount) for, from companies or individuals with pending tax cases in courts, as long as the cases have not been decided with finality may avail themselves of the amnesty.

Aspe added that the BIR was preparing to make available online the forms to be accomplished in applying for a tax amnesty. These forms include the amnesty tax return, the statement of assets, liabilities and networth (SALN), and the notice of availment.

The roadshow is scheduled to be held initially in Baguio, Clark, Tagaytay, Legaspi and Tacloban, and will be done every other day starting Sept. 17, Aspe said.

The tax amnesty law is one of the fiscal reform measures intended to help put the government's fiscal house in order besides helping the government collect amnesty fees, the law is intended to help update the government's taxpayer database.

With the SALNs and tax returns of tax delinquents to be submitted to the BIR, the agency will be able to update its database and plug tax leakages in the future.

The law covers amended tax payments from 2005, and prior years. Its application for an amnesty the applicant is required to accurately disclose assets, liabilities and networth as of 2005.

The standard amnesty fee is 5 percent of networth as of Dec. 31, 2005, for those who have not submitted any financial statements or SALNs as of that date.

The schedule of the tax amnesty fee is as follows:

- For individuals, 5 percent on P50,000, whichever is higher.
- For corporations with subscribed capital of at least P50 million, 5 percent or P500,000, whichever is higher.
- For corporations with subscribed capital of more than P20 million to P50 million, 5 percent or P250,000, whichever is higher.
- For corporations with subscribed capital of P5 million to P20million, 5 percent or P100,000, whichever is higher.
- For corporations with subscribed capital of below P5 million, 5 percent or P50,000, whichever is higher.

Exports seen growing by 11% in 2008

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE SHEETS EXport earnings expanding by 11 percent next year, faster than the 8-percent growth estimate for this year, on higher shipments of electronics and semiconductors.

Basing a congressional hearing with the government's economic managers yesterday, Representative Rolando Andaya Jr. said the projected export growth next year would be matched with a similar 11-percent growth in imports.

He also reaffirmed the transparency Development Budget Coordination Committee's decision to fix economic growth targets of 6.5-6.9 percent. He said the proposed budget for 2008 was consistent with these economic assumptions.

In the sidelines of the hearing, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo affirmed the viability of the 11-percent growth in export earnings for 2008.

"We expect some recovery in electronics. There's also mining, especially in light of the higher investments in the mining sector," Guinigundo said.

For this year, the BSP's export growth outlook was scaled down to 8 percent from 13 percent as the country's biggest export earner, the electronics sector, was facing limited to quite lower prices to sell their goods abroad. Although sales volume has not declined as global demand remained robust, earnings by local manufacturers have softened due to lower selling prices.

Augusto Santos, director general of the National Economic and Development Authority, said the mining sector was likely to attract more foreign direct investments amounting to $1.6 billion in 2008, up from $948 million expected this year.

"If Morgan is looking to double its investments, mining companies which are supposed to invest in the Philippines," Santos said.

In the first half of this year, the mining and quarrying sector expanded its output by 26.3 percent over its year-ago.

"Exports of nickel ore from the southern Philippines to China nearly tripled in March from a year earlier," Santos said.

He added that Lafayette Mining Ltd. was now on track to hit full operating capacity by the end of the quarter.

Computed against projections by the BSP for this year, the 11-percent export growth for next year would yield $55.10 billion and the 11-percent growth in imports would translate to $66.2 billion in expenditures for foreign-made goods. The resulting trade deficit for next year would be $7.7 billion, up from this year's forecast of $6.9 billion.

As the country's main destination for exports like chips and electronic devices also are imported inputs, the import bill is also widely influenced by the export performance.

In 2006, export earnings grew 14.6 percent while imports went up by 16.6 percent.

Bernanke should stick to his guns

A FATHER HEADING BY HIS SON'S bedroom was surprised to see an envelope propped up on the pillow addressed to DAD. Deciding this wasn't the normal time to open mail from your sibling bundle, he read the letter.

Dear Dad, it is with regret and deep sorrow that I am writing to you. I had to elope with my new girlfriend because I wanted to avoid a scene with you and Mom. I have heard that love with America and there we are. But I know you would not approve of her because of all her piercings, tattoos, tight sweaters, clothes and the fact that she is much older than I am. But it's not only love, she's pregnant.

Mother says we will be very happy. She owns a trailer in the woods and has a stash of firewood for the winter. We dream of having many more children. She has opened way over to the fact that meekness doesn't really hurt anyone. We'll be growing it ourselves and trading it for cocaine and cutlery.

In the meantime, we pray that no one will flinch over the NEIS so that the sun get better. She deserves it. Don't worry Dad, I'm 28 and I know how to take care of myself. Someday, I am sure we'll be back so that you can get to know your grandchildren. Your loving son, John.

PS. Dad, none of the above is true. I am not at Bonnie's house. I just wanted to remind you there are worse things in life than my report card. It is in the correct drawer. I love you. Call me when it's safe to come home.

* * *

Stocks jumped on Friday after BERNANKE signed that the central bank would keep financial markets stable and the Bush administration offered help to consumers hurt by the subprime mortgage crisis. BERNANKE discussed the moves intended to credit, mortgage and financial product and again implied that the central bank may postpone to cut rates, if needed.

He said that the housing downturn had been sharp and has been responsible for reducing the annual rate of growth over the past 18 months. He acknowledged how that had impacted financial markets, which have struggled to reassure amid investors' fears about those issues.

He said that the economic picture was more uncertain going forward and that the FED would continue to monitor it and adjust policy as needed.

But he also added that the FED is not responsible for bailing out bad decisions and stepping in every time a hedge fund gets into trouble. He stated that they are already watching the consumer and that is where they are going to be more cautious than.

However, BERNANKE left short of telling consumers and stock investors what they were hoping to hear, namely that the FED will act its short-term rate at its next policy meeting on Sept. 18.

The FED has already cut the discount rate, which affects bank loans, and injected billions of dollars into the banking system in a means of keeping liquidity afloat.

But the central bank may not be willing to cut the FED's fund rate, which affects consumer loans, unless the economy slows down enough to warrant it.

It might be helpful at this point to highlight the responsibilities of the FED. Its prime job is monetary policy, which means dealing with how liquidity available in all times and that is in doing so a prudent way.

Secondly, to adjust interest rates to prevent inflation from rising above a comfortable level. At the moment, there is still some concern on the "core inflation," which excludes food and energy. If rising to the comfort level or an interest rate is not justified.

Thirdly, he must adjust interest rates to prevent the economy from going into a depression but there is no sign of this happening.

Dryshod investors and spending both rose more than expected in July and core inflation grew less than expected. The index of manufacturing in the Midwest rose from 53.4 to 53.9 when economists expected it to contract. Factory orders rose from 1 percent in June to 3.7 percent in July and construction spending improved slightly from 0.2 to 0.4. Finally in the second quarter rose 11.1 percent year on year.

None of this suggests a recession is a stretch it not justified. Jobs created in August are expected to rise from 92,000 to 120,000. I think he should take it and not cut rates.

President Bush said plans to abbreviate the purchase of families hit by higher mortgage rates but they are so vague that few people understand or approve them. He will suspend the tax liability to low-income foreclosure victims but for deductions, their pay little or no, so it doesn't do them much good.

The President will increase the help offered by the Federal Housing Authority to troubled borrowers by expanding the pool of borrowers who can apply to the FHA to refinance their mortgages. He wants to change the rules whereby people are taxed when they have defaulted on loans.

The Democrats wanted Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae to be allowed to increase the limits set by the government so that they own acquisitions could help those families who were in dire distress. As the Democrats sponsored this election subsidies, which do not help them. Many foreclosures even when the use of adjustable rate mortgages, which have low interest rates for two or three years, then rise to a considerably higher level.

Philippine investors should not be affected by what is happening in the U.S. but as global stock exchanges follow Wall Street, they are affected whenever the valuations of their stocks plunge following a sharp decline in the DOW.

The second quarter GDP of 7.5 percent is due largely to expenditure on the middle in addition as well as roads, bridges and schools. A decline to the 3rd and 4th quarter and stocks, import and exports are falling together with remittances.

The latter should pick up ahead of Christmas but the rate of increase compared with last year has dropped significantly. The strong peso means exporting hardest and remittances less valuable. I expect volatility to continue, especially up till Sept. 18 when the FED decision will be known here.

MERALCO fell sharply after J.P. MORGAN downgraded the shares from overweight to neutral after due to higher power rates. I.T. per fell 8% on 15 percent less than expected. The A and B shares will be merged into one class and a 1- for- 10 stock split is imminent. (scottsworld@gmail.com).

Basic out to raise ₱2B in '08 share offer

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PUBLICLY LISTED BASIC ENERGY CORP., formerly Basic Petroleum Corp., aims to raise P2 billion from an additional offering of shares early next year, it said in its disclosure to the stock exchange yesterday.

Basic Energy has tapped BDO Capital and Investment Corp. to be its financial adviser.

The energy company plans to use the proceeds to fund various projects like the exploration and development of energy resources, including geothermal energy, wind and other alternative and renewable energy as well as mining ventures.

One such project is the integrated effluent plant in Cavinti, Zambales-type del Monte.

Once it becomes operational sometime in 2009, the plant is expected to produce 200,000 liters of ethanol a day.

This is in line with the Biofuels Act, which mandates the blending of at least 5 percent ethanol with motor vehicle gasoline by 2009.

Basic Energy also said it had secured its board's approval for the proposed increase in authorized capital stock to P2.5 billion, consisting of 10 billion shares, from P500 million, or 2 billion shares.

The board has authorized management to set the private placement terms with existing stockholders and prospective strategic investors for the subscription of a total of 2 billion shares at a par value of 25 centavos a share, to comply with requirements of the Securities and Exchange Commission, it announced. The unissued and paid-up shares out of the total increase in capital.

The board also authorized management to file an application for a stock rights offer with the stock exchange, immediately after the SEC approves the capital increase.

Under the planned stock rights, one share will be offered for every two shares held as the same par value price of 25 centavos a share.

The board has designated BDO Capital and Investment Corp. as the issue manager and selling agent for the rights offer.

Basic Energy also disclosed that it has entered Joint Operation Petroleum Corp. president Arran Alcocer as director.

Alcocer is expected to help the company pursue various energy projects.

After Multitech makeover, mining firm will emerge

LISTED INVESTMENT FIRM Multitech Investments Corp. has obtained shareholder approval to reinvent itself into a mining firm.

After the business makeover, Multitech will become Philodrake Industries Corp." the company executive said in its disclosure to the stock exchange.

The firm said it had secured stockholders' consent to raise its authorized capital stock to P740 million, or 740 million shares at a par value of P1, from P340 million, or 340 million shares at P1.

Stockholders likewise authorized the company's board to accept investments or subscriptions to the increase in capital stock by way of a private placement—or an stock rights offer. The board also obtained authority to raise funds to purchase real estate properties, or other assets which may be needed by the corporation.

Additional capital from this exercise will be mixed into working capital, and fund the company's exploration and development projects, as well as to pay for the purchase of mining reserves and equipment.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

September 3, 2007	Stock	Open	High	Low
Aboitiz Equity	Aboi	37.00	38.00	36.50
Ayala	Ayal	330.00	340.00	330.00
Ayala Land	Ayala	19.00	19.50	19.00
Bank of the Philippine Islands	BPI	110.00	112.00	110.00
Banco de Oro	BDO	80.00	82.00	80.00
Globe Telecom	Globe	1,200.00	1,220.00	1,200.00
International Container Terminal Services	ICTS	3.50	3.60	3.50
Jollibee Foods	Jfc	45.00	46.00	45.00
Manila Electric Co.	Meralco	220.00	225.00	220.00
Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	Metro	55.00	56.00	55.00
Petron	Petron	4.00	4.10	4.00
Philippine Long Distance Telephone	PLDT	2,500.00	2,550.00	2,500.00
San Miguel	San Mig	95.00	97.00	95.00
SM Investments	SM	450.00	460.00	450.00
Universal Robina	Robina	18.00	18.50	18.00

Stocks up 0.1%

From page B1

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), which suffered an hours its lowest since would be hurt by a lower tariff rate set by regulators, they said.

Investors meanwhile also refrained from making aggressive bets with key Asian markets mostly unimpressed with measures unveiled by US President George W. Bush last week to address problems in subprime mortgages.

The composite index rose 3.88 points to 3,368.14, after moving between 3,359.41 and 3,379.03. A total of 2.2 billion shares worth P4.4 billion changed hands.

Decliners led advancers, 57 to 55, while 30 stocks ended flat.

Meralco, which began trading as a single class of share, plunged 11.6 percent, with analysts expecting it to take tariffs by an amount smaller than what it has proposed after a regulator approved a new method in computing the price of electricity it sells.

Meralco shares closed P13 on Friday.

"The impression, based on the ruling, was that Meralco won't be getting the top end of its power rate hike proposal," said Jessie Tan, analyst of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"The bond rout threw it. Bad news may be a change in the target price for Meralco," said Tan.

"Technically, there is already a huge gap from Meralco's previous closing level of P205. This is an opportunity for investors to buy shares again," he said. AFP

Productivity stagnant in SE Asia, ILO says

PRODUCTIVITY IN SOUTHeast Asia has been mostly stagnant over the last decade, with workers producing only a seventh of the wealth compared to their counterparts in developed economies, a UN agency said yesterday.

Productivity in Southeast Asia and the Pacific has been less impressive than East Asia," the report said. "Nevertheless, the region has profited from the economic boom in China and India and the good economic performance of most developed economies in recent years."

In South Asia, productivity was eight times less than in rich countries, according to the report. The good news is there are less poor Asian workers.

The study included eight of 11 Southeast Asian countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. East Asia includes China, Hong Kong, South Korea and Taiwan.

South Asia encompasses Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. AP

Global stocks cool off after rally

Asia generally positive in outlook, analysts say

HONG KONG—ASIAN STOCK MARKETS took a breather yesterday with Tokyo's Nikkei slipping on fresh concerns about the economy, and the yen traded in a small range in a session likely to be dulled by the US Labor Day holiday.

Mixture news was expected to help European stocks extend recent gains, with indexes in Britain, Germany and France open opening firmer. Gay on France and Saxo Bank unveiled revised books of its 10-month-old merger plan.

The underlying tone in Asian markets was generally positive after US President George W. Bush and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke both talked about tackling a credit problem that had gripped financial markets.

Bush announced on Friday proposals intended to prevent homeowners from defaulting on risky mortgages, while Bernanke said the Fed would take extraordinary steps to shorter the economy from turmoil in financial markets.

"Bernanke's and Bush's comments were quite positive, but we still need to look at US economic indicators and determine how much the economy is slowing down," said Kim Heung-kwan, a strategist at Woori Investment and Securities. "If all we can learn more confidence, the markets will trade in a bound range."

By early yesterday afternoon, MSCI's measure of Asia Pacific stocks excluding Japan was up 0.5 percent at a three-week high.

The index had rallied 3.8 percent last week and was now about 16 percent above a three-month trough plumbed on Aug. 17, but still 6 percent below its July 24 record high.

Tokyo's Nikkei eased 0.3 percent, weighed by data showing Japanese firms unexpectedly cut capital spending by 4.9 percent in April-June from the same 2006 quarter.

Also under pressure, Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index, fell 0.9 percent, recalling Dow a record high hit to the previous session. Other major markets in the region were due to modestly firmer.

"Investors are puzzled about the direction of the market, but financial markets have been rebounding as fast as one wants to miss out on the action, so stocks with news like China Eastern are doing well," said Steve Cheng, executive director at Hong Kong Finance.

China Eastern Airlines nearly doubled to raise as a second after Singapore Airlines and its parent Temasek agreed to buy a combined 24 percent stake in the Chinese airline for $918 million and Singapore Airlines shares climbed 1.8 percent.

Investors also snapped up Australia's Leighton Holdings, driving the shares up 6.3 percent, after the construction firm said it would buy a stake in Dubai-based Al Habtoor Leighton to expand in the lucrative Gulf markets.

But caution ahead of key US data due this week as well as a Thursday policy-setting meeting at the European Central Bank kept the yen in a tight range.

The dollar bought about 118 yen, up slightly from late US levels, while the euro traded 155.35 yen.

The single currency was little changed at $1.3645.

The high-yielding Australian dollar climbed above 82.20 US cents after a batch of economic data underlined expectations the country's central bank would keep a bias towards raising interest rates.

Australian Japanese government bonds (JGBs) dipped under pressure after Friday's fall and ahead of a 10-year note auction this week.

The yield on the 1.5 year JGB climbed three basis points to a two-week high of 1.630 percent.

London Brent crude put on 21 cents to $72.90 on worries a potentially catastrophic Category 5 storm in the Atlantic Ocean may disrupt supply, while spot gold held above $675 an ounce after Friday's rally.

"I don't think the subprime problem has resolved and the market's concerns may but the US slowdown and the Fed clearly relieved the market, which helped lift gold," said Tomas Kagyeema, analyst at Kasiron Asset Management. Reuters

Mattel recall batters China's reputation

A WOMAN walks past a banner of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) summit in "Forward Sydney". The host of ministers overshadowed an agenda dedicated to climate change and trade as meetings kicked off ahead of the summit. AP

Asia-Pacific chiefs bid to revive trade talks

GUANGDONG, CHINA—AS HUNDREDS OF blue, green and yellow plastic toy keyboards roll off an assembly line at the Hong Yih Group factory, a team of quality control workers examine each one.

Posters hanging in work stations show snapshots of what the keyboards found for Japan should look like. Arrows point to areas that need special attention. Brief notes remind the workers not to inhale fumes.

Amid an international furor over recalls of Chinese-made products, factories like the Hong Yih plant say ensuring quality is not a new fad for them.

"We do our own product testing here," said Ming Tsung Lu, manager of the Taiwan-owned plant in Dongguan, an industrial city in southern China's Pearl River Delta. "You've got to do it, or else you'll have big trouble, like Mattel did."

Major US toymaker Mattel Inc. has recalled millions of Chinese-made Barbie play sets, Polly Pocket dolls, Batman figures and other toys because of safety problems, one of the largest in a series of recalls and allegations of shoddy practices that have put Chinese manufacturers on the defensive.

The Chinese government is trying to reform the "Made in China" label and shore up an export sector that accounts for a huge chunk of the economy. The sprawling industrial cluster in the Pearl River Delta, which ranked China into the world's workshop, sits at the epicenter of the crisis. Many of the recalled toys remain outside of the store. The recent problems are unlikely to drive business to other Asian nations, such as Vietnam and Malaysia, to any real cost.

"We're not countries can do what we do," said Sterling Wang, deputy general manager of Rock Long Electroplating Ltd., which operates a factory in Guangdong that makes plating parts on bulbs for Bissell, jewelry and other items.

Mattel, while defending its operations in China, also is stepping up announcement random testing of its Chinese suppliers and will test every batch of products before they leave the factory.

"No system is perfect," Robert Eckert, chief executive of Mattel said in a conference call with the media last month.

Asia-Pacific leaders will this week press for the urgent revival of deadlocked world trade talks and urge crucial concessions by the world's major players, according to a draft statement seen Monday.

Hailing upcoming negotiations in Geneva as an "unparalleled" opportunity to make progress, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (Apec) will make a last-ditch appeal to opening trade indoors.

The appeal comes as Apec leaders gather in Sydney due to gridlock the talkmakers discussions this week in Geneva aimed at striking an agreement that would save the Doha round of World Trade Organization (WTO) talks on breaking down global trade barriers.

"We all realize that the stakes are high. Time is running out," said David Spencer, Australia's ambassador to Apec.

The 21-nation Pacific rim group, which includes China, Japan, and the United States, accounts for nearly 50 percent of world trade and 56 percent of global gross domestic product.

In the draft statement, obtained by AFP the leaders "pledge to push hard for the progress necessary to ensure the Doha Round negotiations enter their final phase this year."

"The negotiations offer unparalleled potential to lower barriers to trade and to create a freer, fairer and more secure global market in which we can all compete.

But a senior Southeast Asian official involved in the preparatory meetings for the Sydney summit said that the summit was looked pessimistic. It does not give concrete commitments that can break the impasse.

"No one is saying when they are prepared to concede," said the source, who talked not to be named.

The Doha round of talks launched in 2001, has been dead-locked in emerging market and developing economies demand lower tariffs for their goods rejected to industrialized nations.

Rich countries are unwavering seeking greater access for industrial products to emerging and developing nations.

Apec groups Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam. AFP

Japan's capital investment fell in Q2

TOKYO—CAPITAL INVESTMENT BY Japanese companies fell in the three months to June for the first time in 17 quarters, casting fears for the economy as a whole as the service industry faltered, data showed Monday.

The surprisingly weak figures led some analysts to speculate that Japan's Gross Domestic Product or a whole may contract and further reduced expectations that the Bank of Japan would soon raise superlow interest rates.

But some experts continued that one-off factors were behind the slump.

The finance ministry said that companies, excluding the financial sector, reduced capital spending by 4.9 percent in the three months to June compared with the year-ear line.

The results of the survey are used to calculate revisions in the GDP for the second quarter. Japan releases its revised growth figures next Monday.

In the preliminary estimate released last month, the government said the world's second-largest economy grew by a mere 0.1 percent in the April to June, or 0.5 percent on an annual basis.

If the revision leans out a negative figure, it would be the first contraction in 10 quarters for Japan, which is experiencing its longest expansion since World War II in 3 recovers from recession in the 1990s.

"Given the unexpectedly weak quarterly result, the economic growth rate might clear the mid-GDP figure will be revised down to reflect a contraction," said Junichi Makino, Daiwa Institute of Research senior economist.

But he added that more data needed to be seen, while some analysts saying a change in sample size likely entered the results of the survey.

The finance ministry surveyed 24,756 companies with capital funding of more than 10 million yen ($86,300) and received replies from 77.5 percent of them.

Capital investment by the non-manufacturing industry dropped a predictably sharp 15.1 percent in the quarter, with reductions mainly in the services and finance sectors. AFP

Airbus A380 flies by Hong Kong skyline to drum up sales

HONG KONG—AN AIRBUS A380 cruised past Hong Kong's famed skyline twice yesterday in a bid to drum up orders in Asia for the world's largest passenger jet.

The four-engined plane arrived in Hong Kong late Sunday a day after it wrapped its wing on an airport building in Bangkok.

Airbus Chief Commercial Officer John Leahy said the aircraft cruised past at 1,200 feet (400 meters) Monday and will drop down to 1,000 (300 meters) during a similar perspective Flight Tuesday.

The white-body, 555-seat plane is visiting Hong Kong to coincide with the Asian Aerospace 2007 air show, which runs from Monday to Thursday.

In Bangkok on Saturday, the plane scraped its left wing tip on a hangar at Suvarnabhumi Airport while waiting in preparation for a demonstration flight.

Officials said the hangar's door had not been designed for the plane's unusually long wingspan.

The A380 had already visited more than 45 airports worldwide by last August, and more than 70 airports will be ready for the plane by 2011, Airbus said earlier.

The plane has been to Hong Kong twice previously, once in November to test the city's airport facilities and in Brazilian just of a promotional tour.

Hong Kong's airport spent $20 million Hong Kong dollars ($2.5 million) on modifications, including widening taxiways and upgrading parking stands, to accommodate the A380, according to its website.

Airbus has said 14 customers have orders placed orders for or committed to buying a total of 175 A380s, with clients including Singapore Airlines, Emirates Airline and Qantas.

Airbus is scheduled to deliver its first A380 to Singapore Airlines on Oct. 15, a delay of more than a year due to production problems.

The plane will fly to South Korea on Wednesday to complete its Asian tour before returning to Airbus headquarters in Toulouse, France.

Leahy said he expects Chinese airlines to order 123 A380s over the next 20 years. And an average of 106-150 Airbus aircraft and order in the next five years.

Demand for aviation in China is expected to surge in coming years as the economy grows.

Airbus said its US rival Boeing Co. Inc. they expect China to become the world's second-biggest aircraft market after the United States, with airlines buying 3,900 to 2,600 planes total in the next two decades. AP

VISITORS look at the model of Airbus A380 at the booth during the Asian Aerospace International Expo in Hong Kong.

BUSINESS

21 groups eye grid concession

Transco draws bidders from 7 countries

By Abigail L. Ho

THE POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. has received expressions of interest from 21 local and international groups as bid for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. concession in December.

In a statement issued yesterday, PSALM said that of the 21 interested entities, nine were from the Philippines, four from Hong Kong, two from Singapore, and one each from Malaysia, China, India, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

All 21 groups were able to meet PSALM's Aug. 24 deadline for the submission of letters of interest.

Of the 21 groups, 13 are represented by investment bankers and three by law firms. The remaining five are system operators in other countries.

Before they could secure the bidding package, however, each interested investor group had to sign a confidentiality agreement with PSALM, as well as pay a nonrefundable participation fee of $1,000.

The bidding package includes the bidding procedures, information memoranda, and the draft transaction documents that the eligible bidders will receive.

PSALM has set a Sept. 21 deadline for the submission of pre-qualification documents, with the pre-bid conference to be held on Sept. 5.

All final bids should be in by 10 a.m. on Dec. 12.

PSALM president and chief executive Jose Emmix said all deadlines could be moved, if necessary, except for the Dec. 12 bidding date.

"The bidding requirements may be changed, but there will be no compromise on the Dec. 12 bidding date for the Transco concession," he said.

Interested bidders for the Transco concession should have a member or affiliate with ample experience in operating and maintaining electricity transmission systems comparable to that of the Philippines, which at least 6,000 circuit kilometers of lines and a minimum 8,000 megawatts of peak demand.

The member of the consortium that meets the technical pre-qualifications criteria should have a net asset value or market capitalization of at least $500 million.

Budget airlines owe growth to RP developers, says US software exec

MORE AND MORE LOW-COST AIRLINES have been taking to the skies in the past five years and Filipino software developers have been largely behind this drive, according to the chief executive of a US-based information technology service provider.

Michael C. Bickoff, CEO of Sevitrade, said in an interview that 70 of the firm's 85 active clients were no-frills carriers that started in business using the software system of the company based in Minnesota.

Sevitrade is a (what?) owned subsidiary of global consulting firm Accenture, and specializes in providing end-to-end services to airlines.

"We have seen dramatic growth in individual airlines and the entire domestic airline sector, and this has been largely as what we have been delivering through our global operations center in Manila," Bickoff said.

Bickoff, who is also Accenture's managing director for revenue business process outsourcing services, said about half of Sevitrade's 800-strong global workforce were based in Manila. It's other sites are opened in the United States, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Australia and New Zealand.

Bickoff said Sevitrade's growth is reflective of the growth of its clients and the airline industry in general, as well as the quality and success of the work that is mainly concentrated in the firm's Philippine operations.

Bickoff said that Sevitrade so far has no Philippine-based clients, but that the company was in talks with possible new customers, although he declined to say which airlines. — Kimeer W. Dimalaluan

PCCI, Jetro put up training institute

By Kimeer W. Dimalaluan

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER of Commerce and Industry said it has teamed up with the Japan External Trade Organization to put up an institute to help nonagriculture local chambers and boost private-sector efforts in building international competitiveness.

PCCI president Jesus Arranz said in a statement yesterday that the institute, dubbed Philippine Chamber Development Institute or PhilCDI, will provide a capacity-building training program for the organization's network of 90 local chambers and 126 industry associations all over the country.

Ltd. said PhilCDI was established in partnership with Jetro, which through its Jetma program (Jetro Improvement Assistance for Improving Business Environment) engaged senior expert Makoto Kono to help PCCI implement the project.

"Currently, PhilCDI would focus on enhancing the capabilities of local chambers and industry associations to provide better services for their own members," Lee said.

"In line with our thrust to nurture globally competitive enterprises, we would shoot vigorously the services of PhilCDI to include training programs for small and medium enterprises," he added.

Lee said one of the initial activities of PhilCDI was the conduct of a series of seminars on basic organizational management designed to provide officers of chambers an overview of how to efficiently manage a business chamber.

The first leg of the seminar was conducted in Legazpi, Albay, during the 15th Southern Luzon Area Business Conference held last July.

Gov't to borrow less next year to pay off maturing debts

By Philiabelle V. Ibarra

EXPECTING TO POST A BALANCED budget by next year, the national government will borrow P386.1 billion in 2008 largely to settle its maturing obligations.

The amount is 6 percent lower than the P380.9 billion that the government had programmed to borrow this year to pay off liabilities about to fall due, and to fund programs and projects that could not be covered by the revenues it had collected so far.

The government has cut its borrowing for next year, anticipating that its revenue collection would be enough to cover all its operations requirements. Borrowings will therefore be used primarily for debt servicing.

In a report presented by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves to Congress yesterday, the government's borrowing program for 2008 has a servicing mix of 64:36 in favor of domestic creditors. This comprises P220.57 billion worth of domestic borrowings and P165.6 billion worth of foreign borrowings.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from domestic sources of credit to minimize exposure to foreign exchange volatility.

The government intends to source about 56 percent of its foreign borrowings for next year from official development assistance from bilateral and multilateral institutions, and only around 40 percent from the international capital market. This is because ODA is cheaper than commercial loans.

Of the total borrowings programmed for next year, P220.9 billion or 95 percent is allocated for servicing debt servicing. The Treasury will serve as buffer in case revenue collection falls short of expectations.

After losing in the red since 2004, the government expects to finally post a balanced budget by June next year, ending a balanced budget, however, hinges on the government's ability to meet its revenue collection targets.

For next year, the government aims to generate P1.226 trillion in revenues, equal to the programmed expenditure of P1.226 trillion.

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LIFESTYLE
Editor Chela Bautista-Formoso

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Age is a result of who you are

If you follow your instincts and what works for you, that should be enough

PEOPLE WHO SURvive longest are those who have found balance in several aspects of their lives.

Psychiatrist George Vaillant (Harvard) says the best adapted to their psychological life use humor. This situation is characterized by:

1. Stability in family life
2. Satisfying marriage
3. Family-loving abuse
4. Continued growth to career
5. Absence of disabling mental illness
6. Sex as alcoholic
7. Few chronic illnesses

Awareness

Is there a method to achieving satisfaction in one's later years? Deepak Chopra in "Ageless Body, Timeless Mind" says, if you follow your instincts and what works for you, that should be enough.

The way you age is truly a result of who you are. This has to do with awareness.

Example: If someone puts weights in your hands and lets your arms up and down, your arm will not gain muscle strength. This is stratified behavior.

But if you consciously lift the weights, then the brain, through willful behavior, will send signals to your biceps, heart and lungs. Willful behavior involves learning because you teach your body to be strong.

Take control

When you take control of your body, this becomes a holistic approach. It involves the mind-body system.

How does one take charge?

1. Tap into your deepest levels of information by tuning into your body talk. Listen well. Do not ignore the cues.

2. Focus on parts of your body that express pain, discomfort. Localize your awareness there. Just by focusing, you are already sending healing energy.

3. Activate your desire and intent will by asking yourself what you feel you need in order to completely yourself. Be honest with yourself. Example: Whether it is simply getting out of bed on the morning in a good mood or releasing that guilt feeling over your intention will influence the outcome of your day.

Staying young

If you intend to stay on this earth for the longest time and to the most fulfilling way there is to

your intention to explore the landscape of longevity.

Aging is as much a part of evolutionary as it is the natural deterioration of the body. It is imperative that you preempt the needs of your body. A little help from medical breakthroughs should be considered.

While still in its infancy, Autologous Stemcell Transplant introduced by Dr. Florencio Lazeo has transformed the lives of many patients with debilitating health changes. Visit lifestemcell.com.ph or call 8917-5234/912.

Testimonials

Since it was made available over a year ago, amazing testimonials have been accumulating. Grace Draper, a 49-year-old patient who had a horizontal hospice in 1999, could not walk without a cane. She has since discarded it two weeks after her stem cell therapy.

Jacob, a 6-year-old cerebral-palsy patient, who was born three months premature and has had 36 operations since birth, now has more interactive movement, improved speech and no surgery for over a year.

Susie Garcia, 40, heart patient, and Lourdes Barbero Ramos and Fiscelo Lacsa died the procedure seemed back the clock for them by 10 years. A 78-year-old man of Swedish descent who suffered from the test no common. Chlamydia pneumoniae, improved after two weeks. His lung capacity increased by 5-7 percent, much to the amazement of his doctors.

Dr. Lazeo explains that the two-hour procedure involves the harvesting of 60cc of fat and peripheral blood from the patient's body through a mini-liposuction. The stem cells are then separated from the fat through a process done within the same surgery room, infused with a growth factor made out of proteins to wake dormant stem cells.

This is then infused back into the patient's body intravenously. Stem cells are the building blocks of life, basic cells from which the human body is made.

With a little boost from this medical technology, one can easily delay aging and the arrival of degenerative diseases.

Be young

Your mind can age you or make you older. If you constantly see yourself as old, then you will become it. So, affirm as I do: "I am young forever."

Love and light!

THE BEER BELLY REDUCER

Fast And Easy Inch-Loss For Men

For men who want to lose that bulging and unsightly belly quickly and easily, now there is a solution! Plastic surgeons have invented a machine that can "melt away" stubborn tummy fat in a patient's lunchbreak – **ULTRASHAPE**. This treatment gets rid of unwanted bulges and, unlike liposuction, does not require surgery. It's very effective in removing excess stomach fat, love handles or fat in other areas.

FAST, EFFECTIVE and SAFE, it's the most advanced non-invasive method of fat reduction to date. It works by focusing high frequency ultrasound waves from outside the body to targeted areas. These ultrasound waves break down fat cells without damaging blood vessels or other tissues. The fat cells are then eliminated through natural processes over a period of about 3 weeks. In the same way the body dissipates the discoloration from a bruise.

Ultrashape was founded 6 years ago in USA by Ami Glickman M.D., formerly a senior plastic surgeon and Yoram Eshet, PhD, MBA, a leading expert in high-power ultrasound technology. When they developed Ultrashape, it was well known that ultrasound waves were able to break down and destroy fat cells, releasing the fat contained within them. Glickman and Eshet built on that to come up with the unique concept of Ultrashape.

Ultrashape is the first and only non-surgical fat-destroying treatment. It promises a reduction of up to 2 cm. in a single session. It is such a hassle-free procedure. You walk in, get the treatment and go straight to your next appointment. It's as easy as that. Absolutely no anesthesia, no pain and no recovery is needed. Patients can resume their normal activities right after a treatment. It does not have the risks

Ultrashape promises an average loss of about 2 cm. in a single treatment.

of liposuction and can be used to effectively deal with problem areas of fat.

Normally about 4 or 5 sessions are recommended to fully achieve the result required. Both men and women who have tried it were impressed by the immediate results after just a single session. Proven effective, Ultrashape is definitely a breakthrough in fat reduction.

Ultrashape is now available at **Iberia France FOR MEN**. Call 810-7089 for your free consultation. All consultations and treatments are strictly conducted in private.

SNATCHER! HULIHIN!

HARANGIN! GULPIHIN!

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

NABOT, NA-TRAP SI ARVIN SA MGA HUMAHA-BOL...

MARAMING INA-BOT NA SUNTOK AT TADYAK!

BOG

BLAG!

BIRTHDAY NI JENNY? HIN-HINTAY N'YA AKO!!?

BLAG!

GOD... ARVIN?! ANONG NANG-YARI?

JENNY...

TO BE CONTINUED

A. LIPIN

BY JOSUA ABRERA

PAHUT-ULIT!

ALAM MONG GALING SA OPPOSITION 'TONG DUGUT AH GAMIT SIRE

SIGE

SHHH!

PUBLIC!

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

HHHHHH... U R MY NOBLE KITTY KINGDREY

MEOW

PUGAD BABOY

BY WIN JUNIOR

NOEL CABALFIN?! HINDI-HI SIRA...

ANO 'YAHAN DAHIL NILA-BAS DEBO LABANAN SAN DIYOT! ANO ?

HINDI-PERSONAL KASO NIS MRS. MANGUBAT

HINDI-PERSONAL KASO NI BUNSO

QUIET!

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANNY ABRERA

DAILY CROSSWORD

HOROSCOPE

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYN GARCELLANO

Awww! You CAN'T SMILE A THANK YOU AT A PET!

WOW THAT'S SO SWEET OF DELPHY AND HE LOVES PURPLISH SWEET

THANKS! ARE PETS... SAN PETS?

SWEETHEART MUCH! DELIVER ME A PIZZA AND A BUNTOT PAKIMUSS

CONCEPTIS SU DOKO

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	5		4	2	9		1	7
7						8		
	1							
					4	3	8	2
		4	9	1	2	7		
5	6	2	3					
							4	
		8						5
4	2		7	5	8		6	

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKO

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

School for hearing-impaired is 20 years old

THE MARIA LEBA ISSAAC Memorial Foundation Inc., a school for hearing-impaired students, will celebrate its 20th Foundation Day Sept. 5-7 at Blue Ridge, Quezon City.

Founded in 1987, the school was named in memory of Maria Leba Isaac, a Psychology student at the Ateneo de Manila University who passed away a year earlier.

A Thanksgiving Mass on Sept. 5, Isaac's birth anniversary, will be celebrated by Fr. Orly Lapuz, MS. To open the two-day event, it will be followed by a program and activities and anti-pneumonia vaccination activities.

The medical will also conduct an outreach program for the children of a depressed area near Blue Ridge. The celebration will culminate in a Family Day on Sept. 7 at the covered court of Blue Ridge B.

The school, accredited by the Department of Education, accepts hearing-impaired children as young as one year old for its Early Intervention Program, and older children for preschool and elementary.

The school is at 25 Maribar Road, Blue Ridge B, Quezon City (6471276 and 6472876). Estrella Isaac is the director and Lorna Bolong, MS, is the principal.

HEALTHY BEVERAGE

MDI Network's Cheer Honey is a natural beverage used produce desired benefits/flavors of the White Cheer. It has vitamin, enzymes and mineral minerals that help improve digestion. Cheer Honey's also a natural sweetener ideal for people with diabetes. It is beneficial to maintaining good health and is known as a helpful beverage that relieves abdominal and respiratory tract diseases. The product is Halal and BFAD-approved. MDI Network is at Jollibee Plaza, Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City (www.bellnetwork.com/ph; 6330000).

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Commercial/office spaces (30 to 800 sq.m.) are available for lease.
With basement parking and 100% back-up generator set. Please call Lida Reyes at 8116410 to 17, 8171870, Mon. to Thurs. 8am-4pm and Fri. 8am-3pm. Brokers are welcome.

HUMANA by MEDICard

unveils the healthcare you deserve in Sta. Rosa, Laguna

Humana Wellness Center, owned and operated by one of the country's largest HMOs, recently launched its newest clinic in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. Similar to MEDICard, its mission is to provide the best quality health care service to its members.

The recently opened Humana Wellness Center officially began its operations last August 8, exactly a week before its formal inauguration last August 15. Under the supervision of Ms. Grace Montero, the doctors and clinic staff work together to provide excellent service to MEDICard members in the south area.

The clinic exclusively offers primary multi-specialty consultations and other laboratory and diagnostics services. Opening another clinic such as this provides utmost medical services and convenience to patients within the vicinity.

HUMANA WELLNESS CENTER: Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay National Road (facing Puregold Sta. Rosa), Laguna
Clinic Schedule: Monday-Friday, 7am to 5pm and Saturday, 7am to 12nn. Tel. Nos.: (049) 544-0634 to 35

PHOTO shoot and incentive at the pools

SOUVENIR photo: makeup artist Lala Virey, Marie Bonas, Isabel Preysler, Anton San Diego, me and Raymond Isaac

PEPPER of Isabel's gorgeous home

A Madrid fashion shoot

IT WAS A SUMMER SPENT IN Madrid when the Philippine Tatler made a special trip to Cha Tahalomo, home of Isabel Preysler, one of the world's most beautiful and stylish ladies, for an exclusive photo shoot and interview for the cover of its early anniversary issue. Reblogs.

Spaniards call her "La Presidenta" showing "pasion" when they see her in person or "la guapa asiatica Filipina".

She arrived the night before the Tatler's visit and was complaining of allergies that were making her teary-eyed. Worried, she told us she should schedule the shoot for the next day.

She did not realize how close to perfection she looked as she sat in her bathrobe having her makeup and hair done by her personal hairdresser and make-up artist, Lala Virey.

Philippine ambassador to Spain Luzi Bernardo and his wife Candelaria said Preysler was charming and down-to-earth. Candelaria recalled one evening when she and Preysler, accosted by their husbands, were out to dinners Spain-seeing Preysler the people-in and outside the restaurant chanted "La guapa, la guapa (beautiful, beautiful)." A barrage of paparazzi awaited for her outside.

Candelaria said she never saw anything like it before, paparazzi.

Aside from Isabel P's charm and femininity, what makes her attractive is her childlike quality through her open line of naughtiness. Such beauty and personality enamored her to everyone, particularly the Spanish media.

Magazines gave her such titles as "La Reina del Glamour" and "La Reina de Madrid."

Though people know she is beautiful, they often ask, "Is she nice?" The answer is yes! She is nice, humble and self-effacing.

She is the face of Bonmarche Jewellery as well as Perfumissa, for which she did a campaign with artist George Clooney. She is happily married to former Spanish Finance Minister Miguel Boyer, dahlings.

After two years of courtship and an intensive photo calls, a short four-day trip to Madrid in the 6th Qatar Airways made Tatler's anniversary cover featuring Isabel Preysler a reality.

ISABEL and daughter Ana Boyer

MODEL Paola Perales

TRICIA Chongkian with the Bride-of-Scotia (!)

KATE Torralba

DESIGNER Rico d'Oxtosa & Wong

UNILEVER Philippine's nail-rule! owners and dealers who launched the revolutionary solution-in-bandruff: Paul Kalchbrenner, Jacqui Pennington, left, handsome managing director Gilbert Simpson, Sanjiv Mehta, Dondi Esmeno, Jika Dulayan and Chito Marzapuga

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Rhea Tuta Hagora using Ricoh GX7 Digital

For mega photographer Raymond Isaac, silver is chief fashion line. Diamonds and blowjobs are social talk for Maurice Arcache, at times, the drive-up the drive-way lined with cypress was already jam-packing.

We were greeted by Isabel's personal assistant Sabel Veronica, who spoke only in Spanish. I spoke to her on behalf of Anton and Raymond.

Lola V. and stylists from Romana arrived at noon at the same time. We also brought some clothes from the Philippines' prima of chic weeks, Inna Tantia. Isabel said, "I always want to promote the Philippines and help every way I can. Inna is a dear friend and I love all wears loved his clothes."

As the long day drew to a close and after seven changes, Anton asked her to pose with her dogs Tresor and Lola. Isabel's sweet dog, her name Cher dog Betty is named after her mother), would you believe? She said she and husband Miguel thought the sweet might not appreciate the gesture, but when they asked, the women readily said yes.

In the course of the pictorial, Isabel's gorgeous daughters Ana Boyer and Tamara Falco (Baker) stopped to say hello. Finally at about nine in a still bright summer evening, we called it a wrap.

To say that the shoot was one of the most memorable we had done in six years would be an understatement. As travel to Madrid and Spain's other historic and memorable locus, famous for her glamour, style and beauty, was a thrill, palanggas. It was a dream come true and, as we said earlier, worth the wait, dahlings.

Clearing the air

On television, billboards and newspapers, it is crystal clear, palanggas. But Clear is here to stay.

I was told by Clear's top brand manager during a trip, Ann Isaacks: "The recent measles crisis [set] by the metric's fashionable idea on black was for the worst of us underwear as a tactic that... 40 percent of Filipinos suffered from dandruff. [The problem] can be annoying, embarrassing and... wearing black highlights your problem to a point of social downfalling."

There is nothing that can ruin a morbidly obsessed outfit faster than dandruff. And you can't blame it on that ex, at times. I myself have to brush it off scores of my gals' shoulders.

Well, now, Clear anti-dandruff shampoo lets you want any color you choose. Clear promises to eliminate dandruff through a unique active ingredient called zinc vitanol, a patented complex that ensures dandruff will never spoil the shoulders of black coat agents, palanggas.

Wild, wild West

It was definitely my best, palanggas, when the new West signature bestseller wedding cap be hazardous to your health! invaded The Real Estate and Design Club at NBC Tent. The icy hot aroma was barbed in flashing lights. It was a soiree of other delicious pals and sizzling buds, truly a new Urban Discovery experience, dahlings.

For names like Bryan Javier, Andrea del Rosario, AJ Dee and Khai Katrent to chi-chi back on by West's Western Genre.

The place had an underground casino feel. Invitees and some hangers-on were in a flurry to see real hot West models in stylish all-black attire gave sassy West gazebo.

Hottie Charlene stars like Bobbie Christian, Dawnese Cabarrus, Anne Curtis, Phoemela Barranda and Nancy Castiglione were among the absolutely gorgeous who showed up in eye-candy outfits. The NBC Tent was packed as everyone went West, palanggas.

TERREL with her dog Tessie

HJ TORRES and Thom Erdner

SUPERjock Aaron Barreto and Leah Pajot

IMPERIAL Tobacco's Kho Kong and (among) Chandra (second from right), Karen Hengsbar, Jeff Lambert, Perc Joaquin, and Paulino Reyes

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Will the world end in 2012?

THE MAYAN CALENDAR PREDICTED the world would end Dec. 21, 2012. Is this true?

For the world, as we know it, will definitely end on that date, but it will not be the end of the world.

I mentioned in my earlier this article because I did not want to scare people. But I was told by an angelic being that I must.

This article began on my way back to Manila from Poland. In a big kiosk and electronics store at the transit duty-free area, two titles caught my attention: "The End of Time, the Mayan Prophecies Revisited" by Adrian Gilbert and "Stabbing Your Mental Muscle."

The mysterious Mayan civilization flourished in meso-America then disappeared without a trace. It left fabulous temples, pyramids and other strange monuments with obscure writings.

The Mayans always fascinated me. The amazing calendar they left behind traced the precise movements of the planets and the stars without using any instruments. It described the present travels cycle from Aug. 11, 3114 BC, to Dec. 21, 2012.

Back in Manila, I got a copy of article by novelist Benjamin Anastas about the Mayan prophecies, reprinted from the New York Times, from my neighbor Ricky Gonzales, a management consultant. I was struck by the coincidence.

Escalating phenomenon

The article tells about the growing interest in recent years about doomsday scenarios as predicted by the Mayan calendar.

"The Mayan calendar," according to the article, "is at the center of an escalating cultural phenomenon, with New Age seers, that unites numerous spiritual dreams of societal transformation with the darker tropes of biblical cataclysm. To some, 2012 will bring the end of time; to others, it marks the promise of a new beginning; still to others, 2012 provides an explanation for troubling new realities—environmental change, for example, that seem beyond the control of technology and impervious to reason."

Predictions about the end of the world is nothing new. Ancient civilizations, for example, predicted the arrival of God's kingdom as early as the first century. Christians in Europe attacked pagan territories in the north to prepare for the end of the world in the first millennium.

The Shakers believed the world would end in 1792. The Jehovah's Witnesses have set the end dates from 1914-1994.

"Any religious movements with an end-time prophecy is certain to attract followers," says Anastas.

In the Philippines, a religious cult believed the world would end Dec. 31, 1999. Its members went inside a cave in Tagaytay wearing helmets and waited for the end that never came.

A few years before that, a retired military officer predicted the world would be destroyed and true-blue of the population would perish. The object that would be taken by UFOs numbered the flying objects through a beam of light.

Different

With all these failed prophecies, why is this Mayan calendar prediction attracting a growing following even in the scientific community? Is there something different about it?

Yes, according to experts.

John Major Jenkins says the Mayan lineage goes back to 3000 years. He argues that the ancient Mayan "calendar priests" charted a 26,000-year astronomical cycle, called precession of the equinoxes, with the naked eye.

The 2012 end-date coincides with the "galactic alignment" of the winter solstice sun and the axis that modern astronomers draw to bisect the Milky Way, called the galactic equator.

Adrian Gilbert, in his book "The End of Time" says, "Not only is the night of 21-22 December the longest in the year, but because of the precession of the equinoxes it corresponds with the day the sun stands exactly on one of the narrow crossing points of the ellipse with the meridian plane of the Milky Way."

Gilbert names this position the "southern cross gate...its counterpart, the northern star gate being placed exactly over the up-stretched hand of Orion."

Precession refers to the "slow movement of the axis of a spinning object around another axis." Equinox is "the time the sun crosses the celestial equator, when day and night are of equal length."

Gilbert says this means on Dec. 22, any person observing the sun will also be looking toward the core of the Milky Way, the place astronomers say has a black hole with a mass many times their own, but times that of our sun.

Gilbert believes what was people, and in the Book of Revelations it already happening, coinciding with the Mayan calendar. "This moment," says Gilbert, "when the sun is located in the earth's east gate and Orion, with its northern star gate, is dominant in the night sky, will signify the termination of the tribulation prophesied in the book of Revelation and the true beginning of a new age."

Note: for inquiries on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Seminars, Barrio Kalmanduan seminars by this writer, call 8187285, 8926888, fax 8158950, or e-mail innerawareness_2000@yahoo.com.ph; for Davao seminar: Sept. 29 and Oct. 1, call Jess Sagisla at 0917-8013849.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Ernesto C. Velarde

SID Lucero and Rez Plius in "Selda"

No, 'Selda' is not Pinoy 'Brokeback'

By Marinel R. Cruz

WHILE FILIPINAMERICAN INDIE FILMmaker Jon Red was writing the script of "Selda," which he co-directed with Ellen Ramos, he only had one actor in mind—Gael Garcia Bernal.

"When we were in the casting stage and Sid Lucero's name surfaced, we thought he was perfect for the role. Sid embodies the spirit of the character and my ambition of casting somebody like Gael," explained Villaluz.

The coming-of-age film "Selda," which won third awards for Best Edited Picture in Mumbai, follows Villaluz and Ramos' highly-acclaimed romantic drama "Sinapupunan," which debuted in the 2005 Cinemanila International Film Festival. "Martial" producer Viva Entertainment has inked a distribution deal with Korean-based CJ Entertainment in last year's Asian Film Market held during the 2006 Pusan International Film Festival Market in Busan.

"Selda" is part of the year's Pusan filmfest in October.

"We asked ourselves, who is a really good actress of this generation who can have a little bit of risk in her prestige? When the idea was awakened, we said she can actually be the partner of Sid.

(BB) 4A

An amazingly leaner Aga in 'A Love Story'

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

EVERYBODY WAS AMAZED AT HOW much weight Aga Muhlach lost for his recent blockbuster hit "A Love Story." He looks fresh, a far cry from the overall of comedic actor some people think. According to his chef Cheng, Aga refrained from taking sugar and salt, followed a low carb diet and ate only boiled fish, vegetables, oatmeal and chicken breast for six months. He also rediscovered volleyball, gym and boxing workouts.

When I dared Aga that he resembles Hugh Jackman and Tom Cruise from different angles, he laughed and said, "Di ba when one love is combined with another in the complete package [look ang labo!]?" Such humility and childlikeness endears Aga to me all the more.

Head over heels

Aiwan Abalos had to do many retakes of his final scene in "Ha Kaoru Wedding" with Hiljo Salvador. His co-stars kept ribbing him because instead of looking like he's head over heels in love with Maja, he looked like he was sad to speak her.

Perhaps Aiwan couldn't no longer contain his feelings for Maja that's why he was a bit nervous during that love-y-dovey scene. The secret is out is kaya kinakabahan, the more obvious is heaven. What you mean will prove?

Word war

The word war between Ami de Leon and Willie Revillame on their respective shows has gone overboard. Although they both have a right to say what they feel, wouldn't it be better if they weren't so fast angel in talk shows instead of in their own programs?

Ami and Willie should just ignore each other and get back to the business of boxing. They are getting to sound like bickering kids. If they carry on that way their shows won't count low ratings anymore. It's turning harsh into a tete-for attack instead of a talent. The public deserves better.

Rock solid

Dingdong Dantes swears that his 20 karats doesn't even have a tinge of jealousy about his break up with Marian Rivera in "Madrasa." Their relationship is rock solid. In fact, they reinforced info: a FTV teamups together—"Greatest ever." Ding said if love is do a duel of "The Prayer." Looks like they are each other's answered prayer.

E-mail: [illegible]

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SONY

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2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	6 HAIRSPRAY
3 A LOVE STORY	7 1408
4 THE INVASION	8 THE LAST LEGION

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1 A LOVE STORY	4 DON'T LOOK BACK
2 THE INVASION	5 EVAN ALMIGHTY
3 1408	6 MY KUYA'S WEDDING

PIONEER

1 1408	3 THE LAST LEGION
2 THE INVASION	4 EVAN ALMIGHTY

STA. ROSA

1 RUSH HOUR 3	1 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 ROSE	3 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
3 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 A LOVE STORY	4 A LOVE STORY

DASMARIÑAS

1 DON'T LOOK BACK	1 DON'T LOOK BACK
2 A LOVE STORY	2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
3 EVAN ALMIGHTY	3 THE INVASION
4 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	4 1408
5 1408	5 A LOVE STORY

IMUS

ANGELES

1 1408	1 A LOVE STORY
2 A LOVE STROY	2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	3 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 THE INVASION	

TARLAC

STARMILLS

1 1408	4 THE INVASION
2 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	5 EVAN ALMIGHTY
3 A LOVE STORY	6 Rush HOUR 3

BACOLOD

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2 ROSE	2 A LOVE STORY
3 MY KUYA'S WEDDING	3 MY KUYA'S WEDDING
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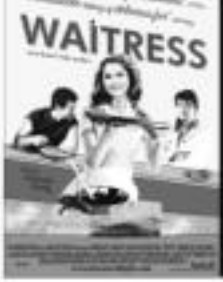
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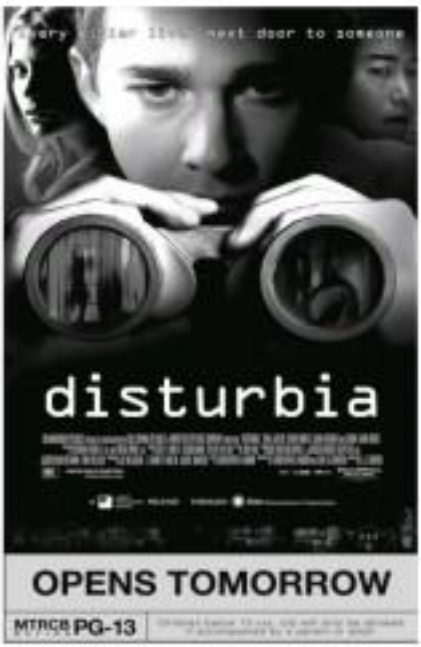
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Protecting kids from exploitative TV commercials

PARENTS, EDUCATORS, advertisers and TV people have maybe buttressed each more after a relatively new development in the United States that's an relevant to our situation here: The growing concern over the negative influence of television and child-slanted TV commercials on very young viewers.

Some studies have underscored the negative effect, hence the decision of some parents to disallow exposure to TV of children two years old or younger.

Even with older kids, their viewing is closely supervised, with an older person present to answer young viewers' questions or explain potentially threatening aspects of programs being viewed.

In addition, parents are strongly cautioned against taking the line of least resistance and using the TV set as their small children's electronic "pyoc," regardless, or reward for good behavior.

Many parents plead guilty to this expedient use of the medium, belatedly realizing that this electronic "babysitter" can expose their vulnerable kids to excessively mature or challenging images and dialogue that they aren't ready to assimilate.

Other negative effects abound: "TV-oriented" children tend to be passive, overweight, less adventurous and creative, lacking in social skills, etc. No wonder, even outcasts of TV networks don't allow their very young children to watch television (of course, they don't let the public know).

Another major area of concern is the proliferation on the tube of commercials heavily slanted to make young viewers desperately want to own or consume the products being advertised. These TV spots even urge kids to badger their parents about buying those products... right now!

These commercials are no no's because they encourage kids to become covetous, materialistic, desperate to keep up with other children and flawed as human satisfaction.

It's worse when the TV spots make it a point to use child talents as little "salesmen" who pitch a product's features so slickly as to convince even cold-hearted Scrooge. Child viewers see these little salesmen's spiels and jingles, and the precocious commercialization of our children is complete.

Some advertisers will assure that all they want to do is sell their products, not bring the fate of the fatherland to minutes. Some TV people will point out that we're overdoing and flawed to find the immense secret "free" TV provides.

Fine—but what about young viewers' welfare? Shouldn't it also be factored into the equation, so all parties are justly served?

Since most kids can't speak up for themselves, parents and educators have to do it for them.

CHILLO Garcia and Sid Lucero

No, 'Selda' is not Pinoy . . .

From page B1

character," said Villaluna. "Esteban is a charming, brooding person who has grown old inside the prison. He thought only of freedom-barely."

Your film's story line is similar to "Broken Trails Mountain." Aren't you worried your work would be compared to it?

Villaluna: We are confident that our material is not a copycat of "Brokeback Mountain." In fact, its treatment is so different from that movie that at the end, "Brokeback Mountain" might not even be mentioned. Comparisons will be inevitable but we're ready for it.

Your tandems proved effective in "Banyan." How do you divide work?

Ellen: Some people will find it weird to see two directors working on one film, but what happened with "Banyan" was that I handled the visual aspect while Paolo took care of the actors and acting. Before we begin filming, we discuss all the shots that are needed.

Paolo: We have been blessed for having the same aesthetic sensibility so we rarely argue on shots. We work less since we discuss everything before filming.

Will you be an effective working duo?

Paolo: We're known in the independent community as short filmmakers. I do my documentaries and she does her animation. But always, we work together. I'm either Ellen's assistant director or her editor or assistant.

How is challenging to your role in "Selda"?

Ana: I've never had a relationship with a guy who is bisexual. I don't know how it's like. The challenge is how to portray the role convincingly.

Emilio: It's difficult for me, since it's hard-to for me to fall in love with another man. But I promise to give it 100 percent effort.

How far would you go in terms of baring skin?

Sid: Gone-sko. I'm willing to go as far as the script will take me...as long as it's for the greater good of the film.

Ana: It has to be artistic. I've done it before. Hope long gumising kami.

Emilio: This will be a first for me. I've had offers like these before, but I wasn't sold on them. I guess it's about time that I do it; the script is well-written. I'm willing to do anything for the script.